



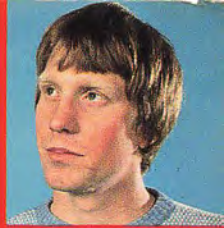
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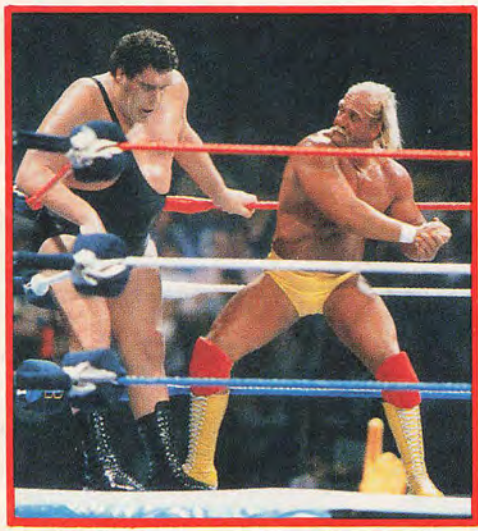
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Wrestling

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**The Superpowers'
Super Victory:
DUSTY RHODES &
NIKITA KOLOFF
WIN THE
CROCKETT CUP!**



**After Climbing
The Highest Mountain ...
WHERE DOES
HULK HOGAN GO NEXT?**

**STAN LANE:
"JIM CORNETTE SAVED
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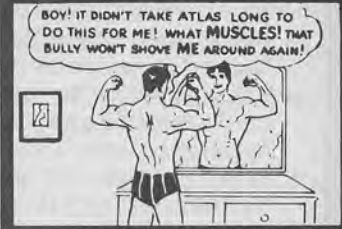


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INSIDE

Wrestling

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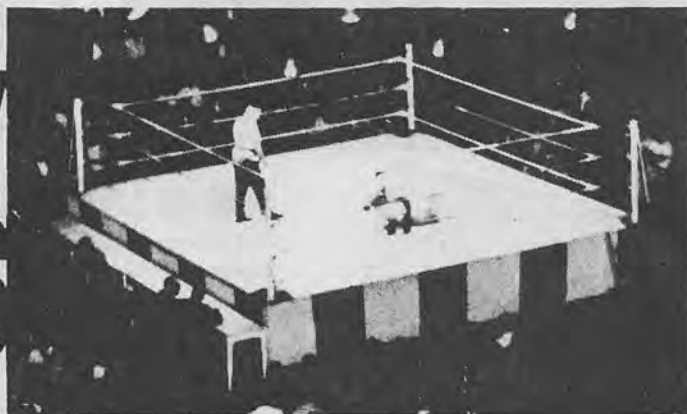
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Andre the Giant and Hulk Hogan engage in a staredown (left). Brett Hart pulls Davey Boy Smith off the mat as Jimmy Hart, Danny Davis, and Jim Neidhart look on (above). Many readers are calling WrestleMania III the greatest event in wrestling history.

WRESTLEMANIA III

With WrestleMania III, the WWF once again reinforced the fact that it is truly *the* major league of professional wrestling. Other promotions may make that claim, but they can't begin to back it up the way the WWF does.

The NWA, AWA, or UWF can only dream of putting on a show of this magnitude, let alone draw over 93,000 fans to a card. When you count the millions more watching on closed-circuit TV or pay-per-view cable, there's no doubt that WrestleMania III was the biggest wrestling card ever, and it deserved to be.

The show was a highly charged, action-packed event from start to finish. Rick Steamboat won the Intercontinental belt and Roddy Piper went out in fine fashion by beating that fat ball of blubber Adrian Adonis and shaving his ugly head. There were a lot of highlights, but what impressed me the most by far was Hulk Hogan's sensational victory over Andre the Giant.

The Hulkster's incredible strength and fierce determination was never

more evident. To my knowledge, there has never been a single wrestler in the sport besides Hogan who has slammed Andre. That alone is a tremendous display of power, but another even more remarkable achievement is putting the Giant down for the three-count.

Andre could have easily kept his undefeated record intact had he not faced Hogan, because there's not another man in wrestling who could ever hope to beat him. However, I think the Giant (and "The Weasel") were intent on proving something to the world, and Andre suffered his first defeat as a result.

This was definitely the match of the century, and Hogan has assured himself a special place in history by defeating Andre. He's the greatest wrestler of all time, and WrestleMania III just reaffirmed my belief that nobody can beat the Hulkster. He'll hold the World title until he decides to retire. Hogan is a true champion in every sense of the word.

MIKE FACCIANI
Johnstown, PA

I have just witnessed WrestleMania III on the big screen at the Mid-Hudson Civic Center in Poughkeepsie, New York, and I have never been more satisfied. While the Hogan-Andre bout was not the best on the card, it was a thriller. My personal favorites were the Piper-Adonis bout and the six-man contest featuring The Hart Foundation and Danny Davis vs. The British Bulldogs and Tito Santana. The former's shocking finale (Brutus Beefcake aiding Piper) and the latter's brutalization of Danny Davis (who can forget that pile-driver?) were the high points of the day for me. And what about Steamboat winning the Intercontinental title?

To Peter King: no more predictions, please. In the May 1987 issue of *Inside Wrestling* ("Editor's Notebook"), he said the Silverdome would be less than half full. He was wrong. In fact, an indoor attendance record was set. And by the way, Mr. King, all I saw on this day was good, hard wrestling.

JIM BAKER
Poughkeepsie, NY
(Continued on page 48)

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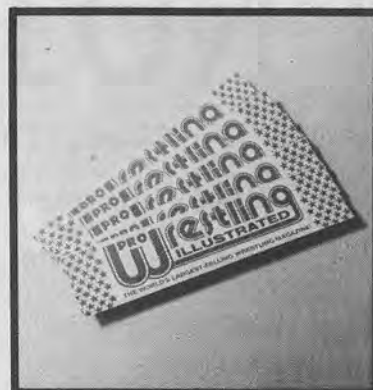
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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Stu
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Editor-in-Chief

For the first time in 12 years, you will notice that the name "Peter King" does not head this page. It is with mixed feelings that I announce that Peter has left Inside Wrestling and its sister publications.

While in one respect I am happy that Peter is taking the opportunity to explore different aspects of journalism, I'm also going to miss him very much. I have served proudly as Peter's right-hand man during my eight years here and have learned much from him. He was the glue that held the magazine together and was respected by everybody in this office and the wrestling world in general. From a personal standpoint, Peter was and will continue to be one of my closest friends. But the time has come for him to move on to other things, and all I can do is wish him all the luck in the world. He is a good man and deserves the best from life.

Change is the nature of the sport—and, I suppose, of wrestling magazines as well. But no matter what comes our way in life, we must press on. Thus, beginning this issue, I have assumed Peter's position as editor-in-chief, Craig Peters is the new managing editor, and David Rosenbaum is now associate editor and has taken over my column, "Behind The Dressing Room Door." I confidently endorse the qualifications of my hard-working associates, and I guarantee that we will continue to bring you the quality magazines you have come to expect from us.

So what effect will all of these changes have on Inside Wrestling and its sister publications? Probably very little. The basic philosophy of the magazines is to provide our readers with the very best in wrestling journalism, to "rip the lid off pro wrestling."

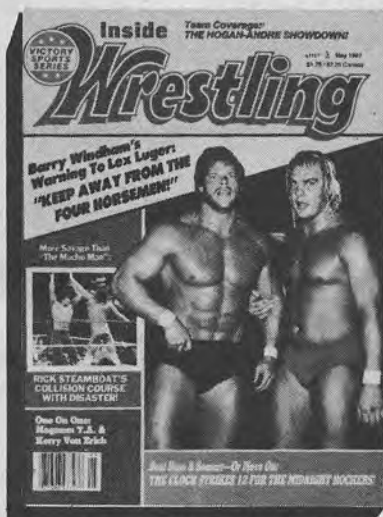
Without Peter around, that lid may seem a little tighter, but the test of a good leader is how those beneath him can carry on in his absence. And I'm quite sure that Peter King was a good leader.

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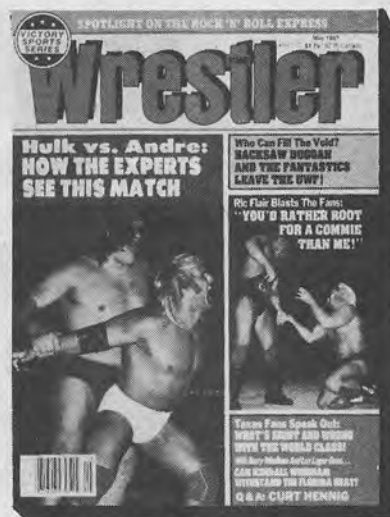
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'TOP SECRET'

Behind the Dressing Room Door

**by David
Rosenbaum**

NOW THE SAD truth can be known. The 1985 headlines trumpeting Mike Von Erich's triumphant battle with toxic shock syndrome have now been replaced by "Von Erich's Death Appears 'Peaceful'" and "Hundreds Attend Von Erich Funeral," because, in reality, Mike never did recover from his illness.

The overwhelming evidence of this tragedy says that Mike Von Erich didn't die of suicide on April 12 in Lake Lewisville, Texas. Mike Von Erich died in a hospital room on August 29, 1985, at the Baylor University Medical Center. Because from that point on, things just weren't the same.

"Before the toxic shock syndrome, Mike was very loving, very calm natured, and very easygoing. He was very laid back," said Gary Holder, a pastor and preacher in Dallas who has known the Von Erichs for years and who performed funeral services for Mike. "It just seemed like afterward he had a hair trigger temper. Things just annoyed him. He just didn't have the patience, didn't have the ability to cope; and yes, I'd attribute that to the disease. At that time, doctors said that if he lived, he'd be a vegetable."

Fortunately, Mike was not a vegetable following his remarkable recovery from the near-fatal disease. Dr. William Sutker of the Baylor Medical Center said back then that Mike nearly died on the evening of August 29 when his temperature rose to 107 degrees. At a press conference the following day, brother Kevin said, "A miracle took place last night. Just the fact that we have Mike with us today is really a miracle."

The aftereffects of the illness, however, were overwhelming.

(Continued on page 52)

THE CONCRETE WALLS of the Baltimore Arena seemed to physically vibrate from the sound of cheering fans. It was the second night of the Jim Crockett Sr. Memorial Cup tag team tournament, and the semifinal round was in full swing. Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff were battling The Midnight Express. The air crackled with the electricity of pure excitement.

Back in the dressing rooms, though, where the fans' cheers remained barely audible through several layers of thick walls and airy rooms, the faint sound of 13,000 screaming faithful was obliterated by the frustrated howls of three angry men.

"Dammit! Dammit, dammit, dammit!"

WHAM!

A wrestling boot slammed against a steel locker.

POW!

A foot kicked a three-inch-deep dent in the same locker.

"This was crap, Paul, utter crap!"



Hawk crushes Stan Lane

Paul Ellering was silent. There was no way to calm his men down, because he knew Hawk and Animal were right. He just had to let them blow off steam. Silence was the only answer he could possibly offer.

"We were suckered in from the start, man," Animal snorted, "we were treated like dogs, like trash. *Defending champions!* What a load of crap! You heard the

way the fans were chanting for us after the match, they all knew it was bull, but do we get a fair shake? Hell no! We got screwed, blued, and tattooed tonight, and there ain't a damn thing we can do about it!"

The result of the Crockett Cup tournament quarterfinal match between The Road Warriors and The Midnight Express is nearly as legendary as it is complex.

Following 10 minutes of hard action, Animal was in the ring and delivered a flying shoulderblock to Bobby Eaton. When Animal went down for the pin, Stan Lane ran in the ring to save his partner. Hawk ran in to attack Lane, and they went tumbling out of the ring, carrying their battle to the arena floor.

Meanwhile, Animal dropkicked Eaton, who fell into the referee, as Big Bubba Rogers and Paul Ellering were battling outside the ring. Animal was pinning Eaton inside the ring, but the referee—groggy from being hit by Eaton as the result of Animal's dropkick—was not able to make the call.

Cornette came into the ring and was fumbling around with his hands, apparently trying to put whatever materi-

ON THE ROAD

with
CRAIG PETERS

als together that are necessary to throw fire. Ellering escaped from Bubba, saw Cornette's fumbling, realized what he was up to, and tripped him. Cornette threw the fire just as he lost his footing, and the fire flew over Animal's head. While all this was going on, Hawk was choking Lane with a chair outside the ring.

Animal fell back to avoid the fire, and Ellering scrambled into the ring and grabbed Cornette's tennis racket. Ellering hit Cornette in the back with the racket, sending the manager scurrying

out of the ring. Ellering then threw the racket to Animal, who used it to knock Eaton in the head a few times. Animal then hit Bubba with a flying shoulder, knocking him out of the ring and into Cornette.

Eaton and Lane returned to the ring, only to be met by a racket-wielding Animal, who then picked Eaton up in a bearhug, allowing Hawk to rebound off the far ropes and come back with a flying clothesline. Bubba carried Cornette back to the dressing room, Lane and Eaton beat a hasty retreat, and Ellering and the Warriors howled their superiority over the Express.

Howls of superiority soon blended into chants of derision as the fans responded to referee Pee Wee Anderson's decision: He had disqualified the Warriors when he saw Animal clearing out the ring with Cornette's racket.

"I had Eaton pinned, dammit, I had him pinned for a good 10 seconds or more!" Animal had to get the anger out of his system. "That jackass referee, *he* should have known. The damn NWA—why didn't they have a *second* referee at ringside? Why didn't the officials at ringside make a move to have the decision reversed? What about all the people watching in the videotape truck outside the building?"

"This whole tournament was bull, Paul," Hawk snarled at Ellering. "We should have been the number-one seeds. We were treated like scum, not like defending champions. You heard the fans chanting, they knew, they knew what was going down."

Hawk cursed and punched a locker, leaving a deep dent. He didn't even shake the impact of the blow from his hand. He disappeared into the showers. Animal followed, leaving Ellering to sit alone on the dressing room bench. I didn't want to approach him to ask any questions, but he knew what I would have asked anyway.

"A lot of water has gone under the bridge since last year's tournament," Ellering said calmly. Perhaps a little too calmly. "Hawk and Animal are not the same people. What happened here is going to make them hungrier than they've been in many, many months. They need more than an onslaught of scrub teams and infrequent tours of Japan to be happy. They need championship gold to keep them satisfied."

Ellering drew a deep, contemplative breath.

"Hawk and Animal are very, very unhappy right now," Ellering said. "And unhappy Road Warriors are the most dangerous of all." □

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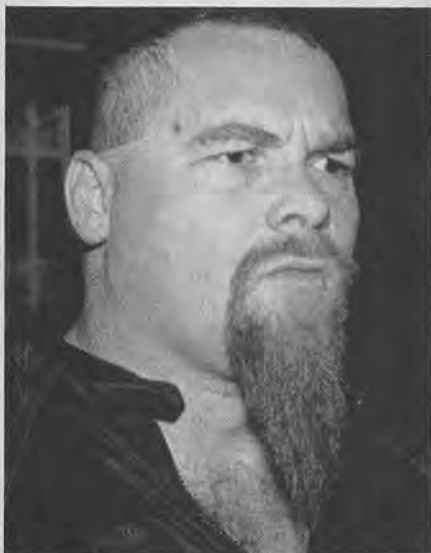


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NAMES MAKING

"Anvil" Jim Neidhart was acquitted by a federal jury in the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania from charges of assaulting and interfering with a flight attendant. Neidhart had faced a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and fines of up to \$275,000 if convicted.

Neidhart, who is one-half of the WWF World tag team champions **The Hart Foundation** with partner **Brett Hart**, was indicted by a federal grand



JIM NEIDHART

jury on January 28 following the incident on a USAir flight from Tampa, Florida, to Pittsburgh. Neidhart was charged with punching flight attendant **Ava Winston** on the shoulder when she refused to serve him drinks.

The trial lasted less than a week, and it took the 12-person jury only 90 minutes to reach a verdict. The government based its prosecution on the testimony of three flight attendants, including Winston, who were working the flight and said that Neidhart punched Winston. The defense was based on the testimony of various passengers on board, none of whom saw Neidhart punch Winston.



BIG BUBBA ROGERS

According to the prosecution, Neidhart struck Winston twice with his fist in an offensive manner when she refused to serve him drinks, once during the first round of drinks and again during the second round. The defense said that no striking took place during the first round of drinks and that Neidhart merely tapped Winston on the shoulder during the second round of drinks.

Big Bubba Rogers defeated **One Man Gang** for the UWF heavyweight title on April 20 in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Gang had held the belt since November 11, 1986 when **Terry Gordy** was forced to forfeit the title because of an injury.

The match ended when Gang dove off the top rope and Bubba moved out of the way. Bubba then executed a dive from the corner turnbuckle to score the pin. During the match, **Gen. Skandor Akbar**, OMG's manager, came to the ring and yelled at Gang before returning to the dressing room.

To everyone's surprise, Akbar showed up after the match in Bubba's dressing room and announced that he is his new manager. "One Man Gang has become lazy with his training and is out of championship form," asserted Akbar. "He would have lost to either

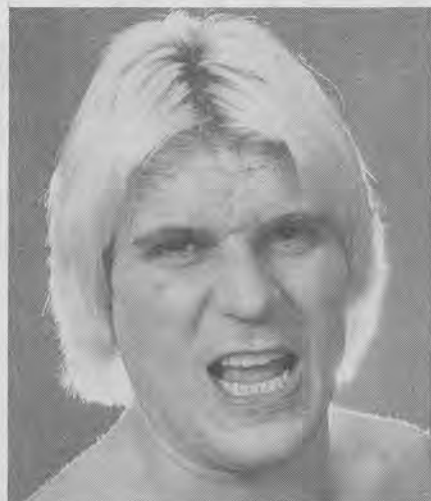


ONE MAN GANG

Ted DiBiase or **Steve Williams** and I could not allow the belts to go to those men. Through my connections, I negotiated a deal with **Jim Cornette**, Mr. Bubba's manager, and demanded a title shot."

One Man Gang is now on his own, although several reliable reports have him headed for the World Wrestling Federation to challenge **Hulk Hogan**.

Austin Idol regained the Mid-Southern title from **Jerry Lawler** on April 27 in Memphis. After the match, Idol and **Tommy Rich** shaved



TOMMY RICH

N' NEWS

Bill Apter
reporting...

Lawler's head! Lawler was injured in the match and was expected to be out of action for several weeks... **Chick Donovan** won the Mid-Southern International belt from **Soul Train Jones**... **Mr. Wrestling II** won the Alabama title from **Mike Golden**. Golden and Wrestling II have feuded recently in the Deep South area... **Davey Boy Smith** and **Brett Hart** split a pair of singles matches up in Calgary. The second, a bloody cage match, ended with Davey Boy's disqualification.

As expected, WrestleMania III wasn't the end of the feud between new Intercontinental champion **Rick Steamboat** and former titlist **Randy Savage**. "The Dragon" and the "Macho Man" have signed for a series of cage matches around the country, which should only intensify their bitter feelings for one another.

According to WWF insiders, Savage has become even meaner since losing the title at the Pontiac Silverdome. "He's an absolute madman," said our



SAVAGE VS. STEAMBOAT



PETROV & KOLOFF

source. "Mostly, we're concerned about the safety of Elizabeth. But you saw what he did to [WWF announcer] **Craig DeGeorge**. He scared the living daylights out of him."

As for Steamboat, things are certainly looking up. Shortly after winning the title, he and his wife **Bonnie** announced that they are expecting their first child. "A little dragon is in the oven," said a proud Mrs. Steamboat.

The tournament to fill the vacant U.S. tag team championship is underway. **Barry Windham** and **Ronnie Garvin** defeated **Vladimir Petrov** and **Ivan Koloff** in the opening first-round match. As you might recall, **Dick Murdoch** and Koloff were stripped of the belts when Murdoch received a 30-day suspension for attacking **Nikita Koloff**. Now, of course, Ivan's chances of getting back

his half of the title are gone.

Instead, Ivan might want to concentrate on his upcoming series of Russian chain matches against Nikita. This will be the first time that uncle and nephew have opposed each other in the ring one on one. Also, NWA promoters recently inked a series of U.S. title matches between Nikita and **Lex Luger**.

The Angel of Death, now managed by Skandor Akbar, has changed his name to **Angel Muhammad**...

Buddy Landell is involved in a hot feud with **Wendell Cooley**... **Rob-**



GANTNER & ROTUNDO

ert Fuller and **Jim Golden** are after the Continental tag belts held by **Jerry Stubbs** and **Dirty White Boy**... **Mike Rotundo** pinned **Sir Oliver Humperdink** for the held-up Florida belt. In that match, **Ed Gantner** ran in and, to everyone's surprise, helped out Rotundo. Afterward, Gantner and Rotundo shook hands... **Killer Khan** has returned to the WWF with **Mr. Fuji** as his manager.

That's all for now, fans! See you at the matches! □

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May 1981/Stories include: Iron Sheik, Von Erich, Backlund, Santana.

June 1981/Stories include: Rhodes, Hansen, Piper, Gagne.

September 1981/Stories include: Patera, Koloff, Khan, Junkyard Dog.

January 1982/Stories include: Flair, Hogan, Race, Humperdink.

February 1982/Stories include: Valentine, Flair, Steamboat, Rhodes.

March 1982/Stories include: Rich, Backlund, Idol, Spoiler.

April 1982/Stories include: Rhodes, Andre, Von Erich, Piper.

May 1982/Stories include: Backlund, Rhodes, Hogan, Von Erich.

June 1982/Stories include: Valentine, Von Erich, Slaughter, Morales.

July 1982/Stories include: Hogan, Rhodes, Steamboat, Adonis.

August 1982/Stories include: Andre, Bockwinkel, Steamboat, Backlund.

September 1982/Stories include: Atlas, Piper, Lawler, Brody.

October 1982/Stories include: Rich, Andre, Piper, Dillon.

November 1982/Stories include: Flair, Snuka, Von Erich, Slaughter.

December 1982/Stories include: Mulligan, Rich, Lawler, Grand Wizard.

February 1983/Stories include: Rhodes, Hogan, DiBiase, Race.

March 1983/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Graham, Johnson, Funk.

April 1983/Stories include: Snuka, Patera, Kabuki, Rich.

May 1983/Stories include: Rich, Snuka, Sullivan, Steamboat.

June 1983/Stories include: Studd, Garvin, Rogers, Orton.

July 1983/Stories include: Hogan, Freebirds, Rhodes, Youngblood.

August 1983/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Garvin, Sullivan, Lawler.

September 1983/Stories include: Zbyszko, Piper, Andre, Hayes.

October 1983/Stories include: Wrestling II, Backlund, Junkyard Dog, Rhodes.

November 1983/Stories include: Hogan, Reed, Von Erich, Dillon.

December 1983/Stories include: Von Erich, Samoans, Valiant, Road Warriors.

February 1984/Stories include: Abdullah, Sawyers, Valiant, Von Erich.

March 1984/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Rich, Rhodes, Garvin.

April 1984/Stories include: Flair, Steamboat, Superstar, Windham.

May 1984/Stories include: Iron Sheik, Steamboat, Rotundo, Von Erich.

June 1984/Stories include: Flair, Slaughter, Cornette, DiBiase.

July 1984/Stories include: Valiant, Flair, Martel, Wrestling II.

August 1984/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Magnum T.A., Idol, Spoiler.

September 1984/Stories include: Martel, Brody, Von Erich, Iron Sheik.

October 1984/Stories include: Billy Jack, Road Warriors, Steamboat, Piper.

November 1984/Stories include: Rhodes, Rich, Hernandez, Warriors.

December 1984/Stories include: Hogan, Warriors, Sullivan, Magnum T.A.

January 1985/Stories include: Magnum T.A., Rhodes, Atlas, Von Erich.

February 1985/Stories include: Rich, Adams, Valiant, Flair.

March 1985/Stories include: Backlund, Billy Jack, Koloffs, Von Erichs.

April 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Albano & Hogan, Steamboat, Gordy.

May 1985/Stories include: Slaughter, Garvin, Albano, Koloffs.

June 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Slaughter, Von Erichs, Studd & Patera.

July 1985/Stories include: Hogan, Von Erich, Nikita, Warriors.

August 1985/Stories include: Wrestlemania, Zbyszko vs. The Tonga Kid.

September 1985/Stories include: Piper, Flair, Fantastics, Magnum T.A.

October 1985/Stories include: Russian menace, Von Erichs, Rude & Barr.

November 1985/Stories include: Steamboat, Adams, Freebirds, Cornette.

December 1985/Stories include: Santana, Brody, Andersons, Murdoch.

January 1986/Stories include: Steamboat, Mike Von Erich, Warriors.

February 1986/Stories include: R'n'R Express, Warriors, Mulligan & Windham.

March 1986/Stories include: Windham & Rotundo, Warriors-Russians, Rude.

April 1986/Stories include: Scott Hall, Rhodes, Flair, Andre, Bill Watts.

May 1986/Stories include: Randy Savage, Stan Hansen, Rock 'n' Roll.

June 1986/Stories include: Bulldogs, Windham-Flair, Lance Von, Blanchard.

July 1986/All-American Special Issue. Stories include: Hogan, Slaughter, T.A.

August 1986/Stories include: Wrestlemania 2, Garvins, Martel, Fab Ones.

September 1986/Stories include: Andre, Rhodes-T.A., Adams, Windham.

October 1986/Stories include: Flair-Lugar, Savage, Fantastics, Warriors.

November 1986/Stories include: Warriors-Flair, Bulldogs, Watts, Adams.

December 1986/Stories include: Hogan-Adonis, R&R Express, Baby Doll.

January 1987/Stories include: Rude-Flair, Piper, T.A., Taylor.

February 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Piper-Orndorff, Taylor, Flair.

March 1987/Stories include: Flair, Missy, Luger, Bulldogs, Koloffs.

April 1987/Stories include: Windham, Steamboat, Ellering, Duggan.

May 1987/Stories include: Windham & Luger, Steamboat, Hogan-Andre.

June 1987/Stories include: Piper-Adonis, Horsemen, Adams, Hall, Brody.

July 1987/Stories include: Danny Davis, DiBiase, Rockers, Rotundo, Andersons.

INSIDE WRESTLING

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A—ON— ASSIGNMENT

BY LIZ HUNTER



Magnum T.A. comes out to ringside before the final match of the Jim Crockett Sr. Memorial Cup tag team tournament. The fans were overjoyed to see Magnum, and his appearance inspired Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff to victory.

LIFE IS CONTRARY to dreams. They lie perfectly opposed. Only crazy men with wild eyes and small children can balance the two. Yet, there are exceptions ...

Even as a child he was very quick, very smart—possessed of a great memory and a fine disposition. In class and on the field, his was the name called most often. Good looks and talent invoked friendship, but never envy; trust rather than bitterness. As trophies and tributes accumulated, his face remained fair and honest. Duty, honor, and family remained his guiding precepts, tenets of life

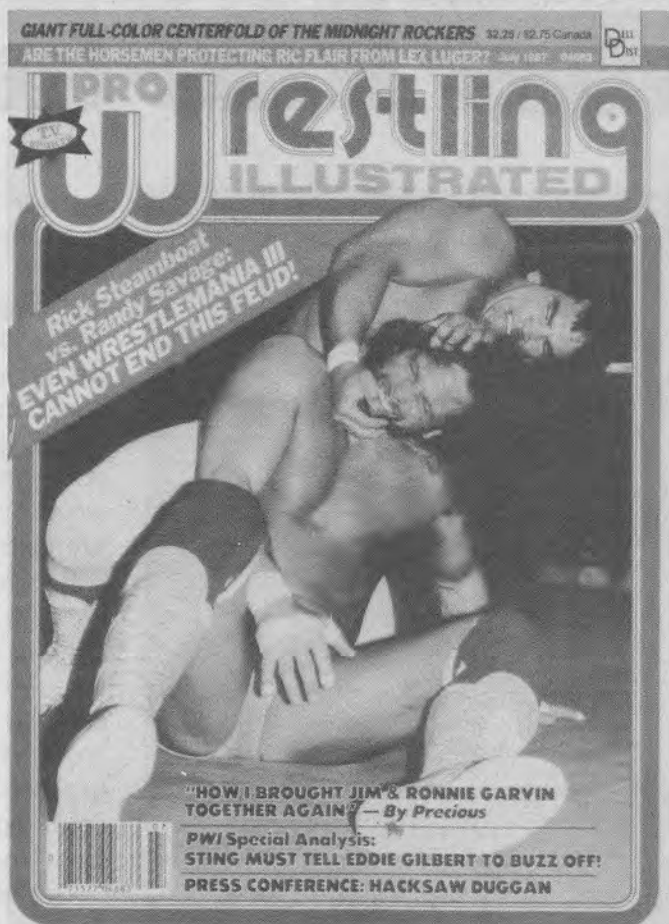
that meant more than muscles and money.

When fame beckoned, and the time to select a proper milieu became necessary, he didn't hesitate. As a professional wrestler, he was able to crusade for noble causes and make the world a slightly better place in which to live. Fans surged into bright stadiums to see him. Unlike others who embrace the ring for cheers and money and nothing else, his commitment never wavered. The more successful he became, the more he was inspired by friends, family, and country. And the more stock he placed in simple virtues.

Titles and belts and championships were won. Challenges were met. Sometimes he lost, but in defeat his nobility never wavered. Never an excuse or a reckless outburst. It is ironic that his latest defeat, at the hands of a Russian giant, garnished him more accolades than all his victories combined. Resourceful, intrepid, brave, cunning, skillful—all these things he was. The future, as they say, was his.

I despaired for Magnum T.A. only once, after a brief visit with him in the hospital several months
(Continued on page 56)

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THE

INSIDER

By Eddie Ellner



Mike Von Erich greets the fans. Before he committed suicide, Von Erich experienced a lot of physical and emotional pain. It was that pain, Eddie Ellner writes, that eventually drove Von Erich to his death.

[The opinions expressed in "The Insider" are those of Eddie Ellner alone, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of anyone else on this magazine.]

NEWS ITEM: Mike Von Erich commits suicide.

Once the shock subsides, the recriminations begin. "Stupid kid. Had everything in the world — money, fame, the love of the fans.

How could he throw it all away like that?"

If things were only so simple. In his brief life, Mike Von Erich had to experience the death of his beloved brother David; he survived, in rapid succession, a near-fatal bout with toxic shock syndrome and a couple of bouts with the law.

The pressure to return from those experiences was tremendous. To be a Von Erich meant to

seize the limelight, battle evil, reward the fans—in short, to be perfect. For Mike Von Erich, the battle was uphill all the way. He was a tough, gritty competitor, but his hardest bouts were in hospital beds and courtrooms, not wrestling rings. It was as if his body was giving him signals: Stop wrestling. Stop the pain and punishment. It's not necessary.

But he refused to listen. His heritage was too strong. In the end, it killed him. The pressures—competitive, familial, medical—led him to experiment with drugs. When his weakness was exposed and he was arrested, he could no longer face his friends, fans, and family.

The effects of Mike's tragic action on Kerry and Kevin—not to mention his parents and younger brother—are unfathomable. How much pain can one family endure? It boggles the mind and can undermine even a Von Erich's faith in God.

NEWS ITEM: The Road Warriors eliminated in the quarterfinals of the Crockett Cup tag team tournament.

Once, not too long ago, the sinister refrain of Black Sabbath's "Iron Man"—the Road Warriors' entrance music—was enough to send opponents scurrying back to the dressing room. Matches were over before they were fought. Paul Ellering complained about finding opponents willing to wres-

(Continued on page 58)

NEWS FROM THE

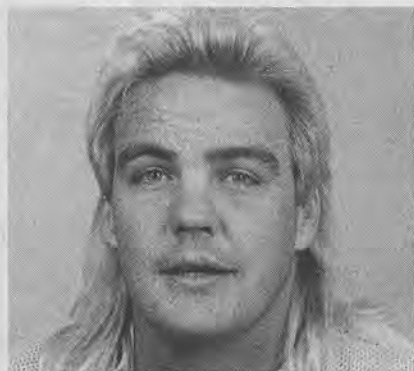
If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571

COLUMBIA, SC By Jack L. Murphy



RIC FLAIR
vs.
BARRY WINDHAM



Following nearly 30 minutes of intensely heated action, Flair captured Windham in a figure-four leglock. Flair held the rope, but the referee saw it and forced the break. Windham hit Flair with a flying lariat but was too weak to cover. Windham regained his energy and powerslammed Flair, then followed up with a second lariat that also knocked the referee out of the ring. Flair recovered and threw Windham over the top rope, but the referee disqualified Windham for hitting him.

OTHER BOUTS: Nikita Koloff defeated Arn Anderson ... Ole Anderson beat Tully Blanchard by disqualification ... Ronnie Garvin pinned Bobby Eaton ... Lazor-Tron pinned Denny Brown ... Baron Von Raschke beat Thunderfoot II ... Nelson Royal pinned Rocky King.

MONTREAL, QUEBEC By Arthur James



ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER
vs.
BRUISER BRODY



This match was for Abdullah's Quebec International title, and the two men went at it right from the opening bell. Brody opened a gash on Abdullah's head early on, then the battle spilled outside the ring. Brody's manager Floyd Creatchman tried to hit Abdullah with a chair, but failed, and was hit himself. When they got back into the ring, Abdullah hit Brody with an elbowsmash and went for the pin. Suddenly, Brody's brother, Buster Brody, ran in the ring and attacked Abdullah, thus disqualifying Bruiser.

OTHER BOUTS: Pretty Boy Simmes beat Gino Brito Jr. by disqualification ... Rocky Dellasara defeated Denny Goulet ... Len "Kojak" Shelly beat The Spoiler ... Sheik Al-Arab defeated Neil Carr.

SAN ANTONIO, TX By Russell Tibboel



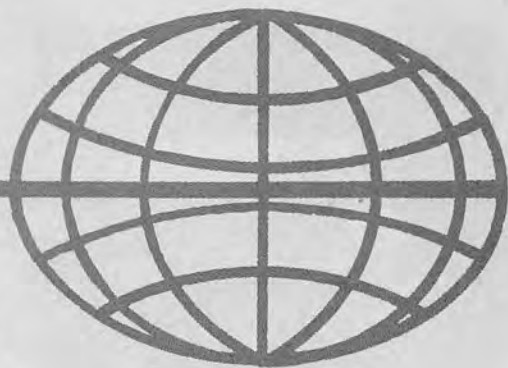
SAM HOUSTON
vs.
SUPER NINJA



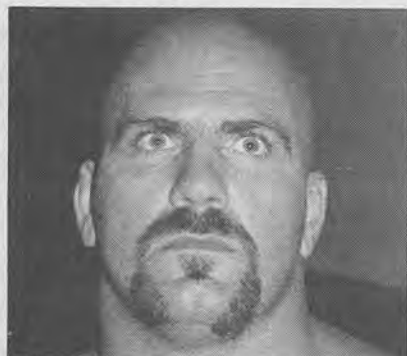
At the beginning of the match, Ninja wouldn't let Houston in the ring. When Houston finally got in, he gained an early advantage, delivering a powerful series of kicks and punches. But the Ninja turned the match around and dominated Houston with karate kicks, chops, and elbowsmashes. At the end of the bout, Ninja went for an elbowsmash, but Houston caught him in midair with a bulldog and scored the pin.

OTHER BOUTS: Steve Williams defeated One Man Gang via DQ ... Rick Steiner & Sting beat Terry Taylor & Chris Adams by DQ ... The Freebirds defeated Wild Bill Irwin, Angel of Death, & Leroy Brown ... Eddie Gilbert & Ice-man Parsons beat Sam Houston & Savannah Jack ... Gary Young defeated Chavo Guerrero ... Baby Doll beat Sunshine by countout ... Mike George defeated Jeff Raitz.

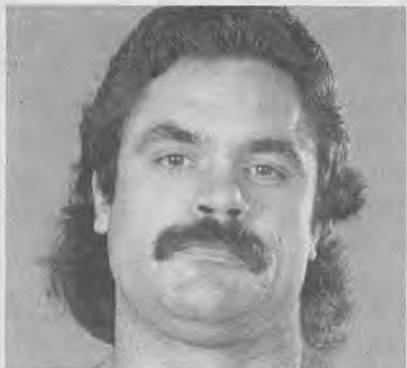
WRESTLING CAPITALS



RICHMOND, VA **By Kevin Cutchin**



NIKITA KOLOFF
vs.
RICK RUDE



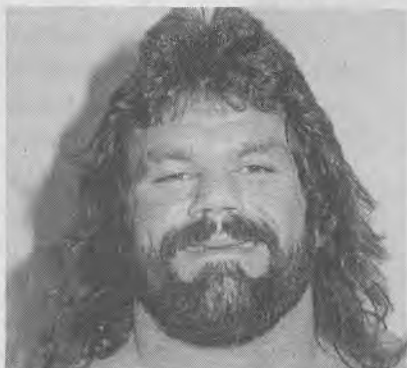
An exciting match for Koloff's U.S. title heated up at the six-minute mark when Rude ripped Nikita's neck brace off and clamped on a full-nelson. Nikita reversed the hold, but when Paul Jones climbed up to the ring apron to distract the referee, Rude piledrived the champion. "The Ravishing One" only got a two-count because Nikita's foot was draped outside the ring. Koloff then small-packaged Rude for the pin. After the match, Rude DDT'd Nikita.

OTHER BOUTS: The Road Warriors & Dusty Rhodes beat Ric Flair, Arn Anderson, & Lex Luger ... Ole Anderson defeated Tully Blanchard by disqualification ... Wahoo McDaniel beat Vladimir Petrov by DQ ... Ivan Koloff pinned Baron Von Raschke ... Lazor-Tron pinned Thunderfoot I ... Konga the Barbarian pinned The Italian Stallion.

ATLANTA, GA **By Jason Holbrook**



ONE MAN GANG
vs.
STEVE WILLIAMS



OMG and Williams battled it out at The Omni on a combined UWF/Deep South card. Terry Gordy was special referee for the match, which quickly got out of hand. Gordy refused to count pinfalls, so he was no longer allowed to referee. With a new referee, the match continued as OMG and Dr. Death fought it out. However, when OMG got in trouble, Gen. Skandor Akbar interfered, resulting in a disqualification for OMG.

OTHER BOUTS: The Freebirds defeated Devastation Inc. ... Rick Steiner & Sting beat Chris Adams & Terry Taylor ... Grizzly Boone defeated Mike Golden ... Savannah Jack beat Iceman Parsons ... The Assassin defeated Randy Rose ... The Nightmares beat Ranger Ross & Jon Michaels ... Missing Link destroyed Jim Bryant ... Nicola Roberts beat Dark Journey, Sunshine, & Missy Hyatt in a four-woman mini-battle royal.

TAMPA, FL **By Daniel L. Willis**



MIKE ROTUNDO
vs.
ED GANTNER



This was a match for Rotundo's Florida title, and control repeatedly switched between both men. Rotundo kicked out of several Gantner pin attempts, then Gantner delivered a vicious elbow off the ropes. Later, Gantner whipped Rotundo into the turnbuckle, knocking the referee out of the ring. While Gantner held Rotundo, The Tahitian Prince ran into the ring and tried to thrust-kick Rotundo. But Rotundo moved out of the way and the Prince hit Gantner instead. The referee climbed back into the ring as Rotundo pinned Gantner.

OTHER BOUTS: Barry & Kendall Windham defeated Randy Mulkey & Jack Towers ... Scott Hall pinned Luis Estea ... The M.O.D. Squad defeated Ron Simmons & Brady Boone ... Arn Anderson & Lex Luger beat Denny Brown & Eddie Roberts ... Kevin Sullivan destroyed Jason Sterling ... Ric Flair beat Mitch Snow.



Matt Brock's PLAIN SPEAKING

BALTIMORE, MD: What a town! You can keep the Inner Harbor. I've never been much for yuppies, raw fish, and girlish drinks, anyway. To me, classy joints like The Copa Club and The Red Garter are what this place is all about. I'm down here for the Crockett Cup tourney, the NWA's \$1 million she-bang. Quite a card. Well, two cards, actually. The

more cheers than when Hulk Hogan himself comes to town (indeed, a guy in the first row had a sign that said "Hulkamania" with the "Hulka" crossed out and "Mulkey" put in!). Also, something of a scandal: The Japanese contingent, Shohei Baba and Isao Takagi, had only to wrestle Brown and Champion to make it all the way to the *quarterfinal* round. A disgrace, with the only good thing being we were spared seeing Baba wrestle an extra bout or two. The man's a legend, but he's a legend several years past his prime. As for the second night, the matches and the competition were absolutely incredible (with the exception of the Japanese team). Of the seven matches the second night (six tourney bouts and another Ric Flair-Barry Windham classic), four were better (by far) than the Randy Savage-Rick Steamboat WrestleMania III match. And that's saying plenty. A hell of a card the second night, amazing pure action, and I can honestly say I was proud to be on hand. I'll be there next year, too, you can count on that.



BILL & RANDY MULKEY

first night was a good one for hanging back and keeping company with the man operating the beer concession. Plenty of dull matches, with the biggest disappointment being the fact that The Mulkeys were eliminated in the first round by Denny Brown and Todd Champion. Man, Randy and Bill received

ATLANTA, GA: I'm still recovering from the Crockett Cup. It's the day after and I'm in no mood to sit through another three hours of wrestling. But this is my job. After all, covering wrestling matches is not a hobby. It's a job, and one I take very seriously. Some of these wrestlers work every night of the week, over 300 days a year. If they can do it, so can I. Matt Brock comes from solid stock and can take the heat. This is the UWF-Deep South show at The Omni, the UWF's first show ever in Atlanta, and they managed to draw a pretty good crowd for a pretty good show. As most wrestling fans know, the UWF is looking to expand, and this is one area they'd like to do well in. For some reason, wrestling promoters have traditionally waged wars in Atlanta. The WWF tried its hand down here. The NWA has been a mainstay for years. The Omni is the jewel of southern wrestling, and maybe that's the reason why. This is a beautiful building

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

with perfect sightlines and excellent lighting. The fans seemed to have a pretty good time, too. The highlight of the evening was the tag team title match pitting Terry Taylor and Chris Adams against Sting and Rick Steiner. Sting and Steiner won the belts, but there was some controversy because Adams had his foot on the ropes when he got pinned, and for some reason Taylor kicked it off. Something's brewing here: I'm not sure what, but my instincts tell me that we'll find out very soon.

DENTON, TX: This is an absolute tragedy in the saddest sense of the word. I've been sitting here for hours, looking for a way to put in writing how I feel. That's never been a problem for me. I'm a professional, a journalist for decades, and I've been hardened in many ways. Things don't bother me the way they used to because I've seen so much. Maybe that makes me insensitive. It sure as hell makes me objective. But a 23-year-old kid took his life here a few days ago, a boy who had so much promise and so much to live for. He left behind his friends, his fans, and most important, his family. Mike Von Erich committed suicide and left me, and everybody else, wondering why. This is so sad. Fritz and Doris Von Erich have now buried three sons—Jack, David, Mike—and that's the kind of pain no human being should have to bear. How does it feel to bury your child? How can it possibly feel to do it three times? These are the questions a journalist wants to ask, but I can't. I just can't. I look at these two sad human beings and I wonder how they have the courage to go on, but they do, and they look for the good side of things. When I heard the news of Mike's death, I flew down to Texas immediately. And when I arrived in Denton, and the full force of what happened hit me, I did something Matt Brock has never done before. I cried.

CHICAGO, IL: I'm back home after Mike's funeral because I needed a break from all that has happened. It all builds up after a while. I've thought of retiring a number of times, but I always talk myself out of it. Wrestling journalism is a very rewarding profession. You get to meet some extraordinary people,

and some very ordinary people. Those are the ones that make it all worth while, the ordinary guys, the middle-of-the-card working stiff who toil day in

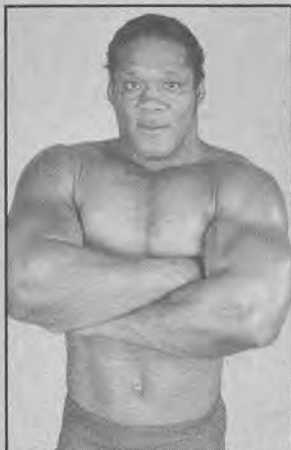


MIKE VON ERICH

and day out, hoping for that one big break that will turn them into a Ric Flair or a Hulk Hogan. Seeing one of those guys actually break through can be incredibly satisfying. I, for one, sometimes look back at my career and wonder what I've gotten out of it. Witnessing the tragedy of Mike Von Erich made things hit home. I've never gotten married and probably never will. Fritz and Doris have gone through the pain of burying three children, but at least they experienced the joy of having children. Sometimes I regret that. Sometimes I regret a lot of things. Maybe it is time to retire and start enjoying other things in life. I don't know. It would make a great story for one of these magazines: "You Decide: Should Matt Brock Retire?" But then, I'd probably end up writing the story and finding out, for the umpteenth time, this is what I love to do. Writing is my wife. This column is my baby. These things can never die. □

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



TONY ATLAS

Atlas, who until recently held the World Class television title, has left the WCCW and is now wrestling steadily in Puerto Rico for the World Wrestling Council. Just one week after arriving in the WWC, Atlas and partner Miguel Perez

Jr. captured the North American tag team belts from Bob Heffernan and El Gran Mendoza. "I think I've already made an impact down here," said Atlas. "The competition is great, but I'm ready for it."



DUTCH MANTEL

Mantel split up with Kansas Jayhawk partner Bobby Jagers shortly before the Jim Crockett Sr. Memorial Cup tag team tournament in Baltimore, and is now in the Southwest Continental area. The veteran Texas native is sticking

to singles wrestling and is hot on the trail of Mr. Wrestling II's Alabama heavyweight title. "That old man is gonna find out that I've got more moves than he knows how to deal with," said Mantel. "His title is history."



SWEET BROWN SUGAR

The death of Mike Von Erich has already inspired at least one wrestler. Sweet Brown Sugar, whose real name is Skip Young, had been retired, but has decided to return to the World Class area. "Mike's death

did it for me," said Skip. "Mike was a dear friend of mine, and he left a few jobs unfinished. I'm gonna fight for Mike's honor by fighting those who sought to bring him down. Mike Von Erich will not be forgotten."



JOHN TATUM

The former beau of Missy Hyatt fell upon hard times earlier this year when he was involved in an automobile accident in which the driver of the other car was killed. Tatum was cleared of all criminal charges. He was severely injured,

he now reports that he is nearly recovered. Tatum is running a sandwich shop in Arlington, Texas, with former UWF tag team partner Jack Victory, and is hoping to make a comeback, possibly as early as this summer.

INSIDE WRESTLING

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CAPSULE PROFILE

TITO SANTANA HAS once again regained prominence among the WWF fan favorites (*"The fans have always been a great inspiration to me"*) ... Born in Tocola, Mexico, but raised in Mission, Texas (*"Mexico is my home, but I love this country"*) ... Attended West Texas State University, where he played tight end (*"Football was good training for the squared circle"*) ... Played in the Canadian Football League before quitting the gridiron to devote himself to wrestling (*"I realized I had a brighter future in wrestling"*) ... Began his career in Texas and moved on to the Mid-Atlantic area (*"I gained a lot of experience from some great men"*) ... Went to the AWA, where he received several World title shots against Nick Bockwinkel (*"That was my first opportunity to win a big title, and I made the most of it"*) ... He and Ivan Putski came to the WWF, where they defeated Johnny and Jerry Valiant to win the WWF World tag team title (*"Ivan was a fantastic partner"*) ... After they lost the belts, Santana resumed the chase after Bockwinkel's belt but once again failed to win the title (*"The man always cheated"*) ... Went back and forth between Georgia and Texas (*"I wanted to test my abilities by wrestling in two different areas"*) ... In Texas, Santana

TITO SANTANA

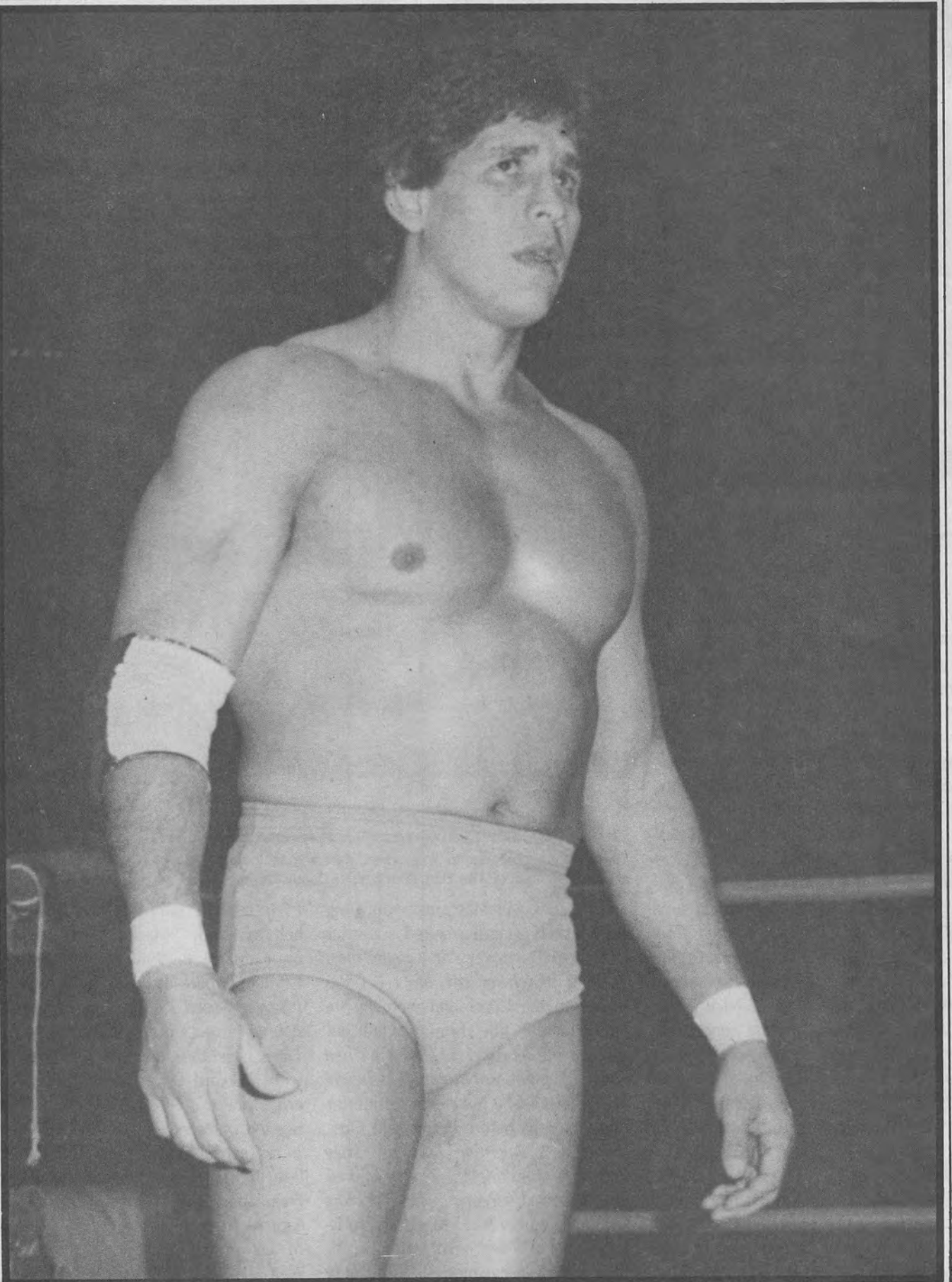


Tito Santana prepares to whip Brett Hart across the ring. Santana wants revenge on another member of The Hart Foundation, Danny Davis.


and his idol, Mil Mascaras, won a tag team match against Masked Superstar and Super Destroyer (*"It was the most exciting match of my life"*) ... Returned to the WWF and won the Intercontinental title from Magnificent Muraco on February 11, 1984 (*"I had Muraco's number. No way was he going to beat me!"*) ... Held the title for seven months before losing it to Greg Valentine (*"Valentine hurt my knee and stole the title"*) ... The injured knee required surgery (*"Those doctors saved my career"*) ... Made a surprising comeback and went after Valentine with a vengeance (*"The Hammer" wasn't going to get away with it"*) ... Regained the title in a cage match in Baltimore on July 6, 1985

(*"My tenacity paid off"*) ... Lost the belt to Randy "Macho Man" Savage on February 8, 1986 in the Boston Garden, where he had first won it (*"Savage used a foreign object. I couldn't expect justice because Danny Davis was the referee"*) ... Teamed with Junkyard Dog and then with Pedro Morales (*"When I lost the belt, I needed partners who would help me to not get discouraged"*) ... After they lost the tag team title to The Hart Foundation, The British Bulldogs asked Santana to be their partner (*"I wanted to get back at Davis in the worst way"*) ... Santana and the Bulldogs lost to the Harts in a controversial finish at WrestleMania III (*"Davis, I'm not finished with you!"*) □

CAPSULE PROFILE PINUP

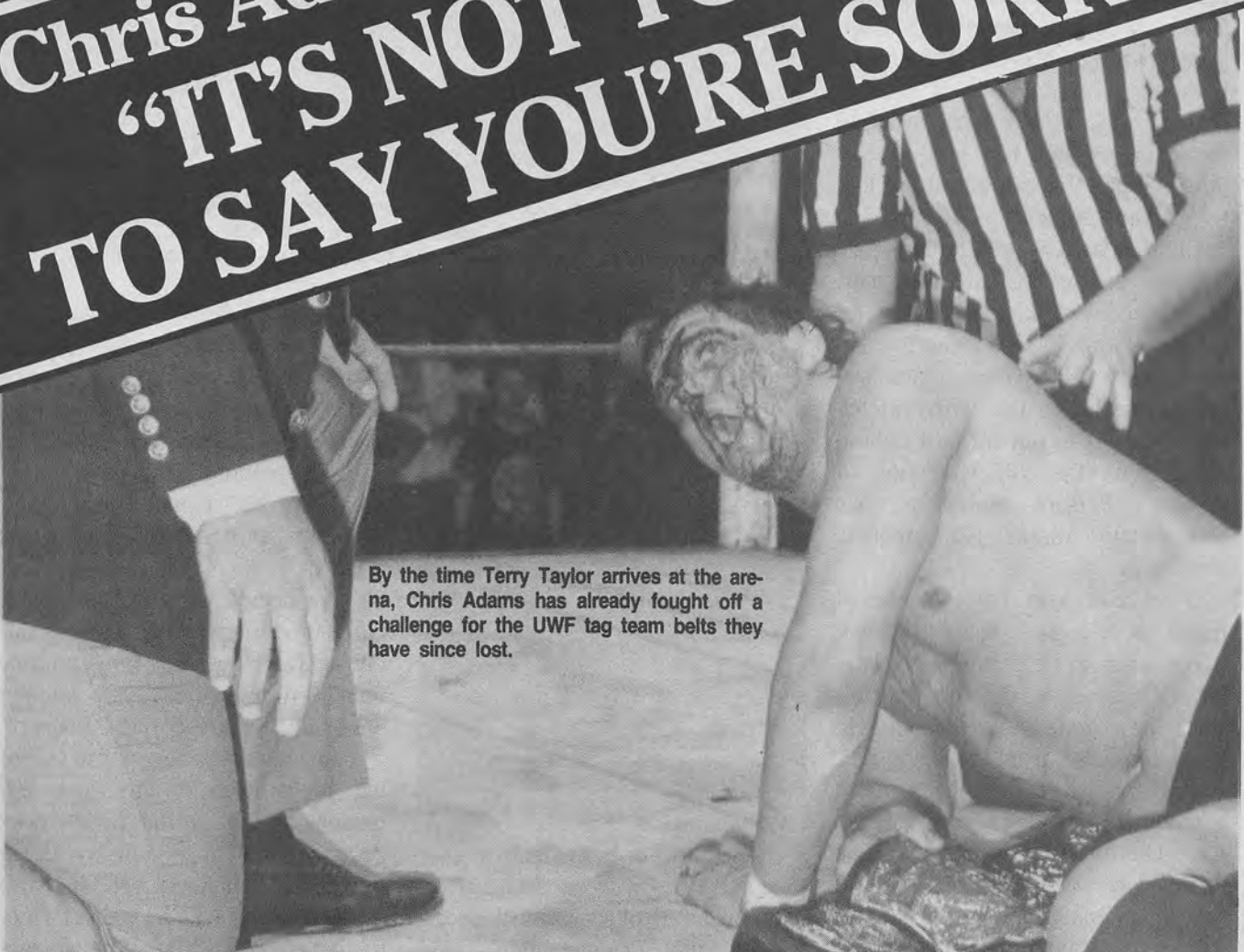


TITO SANTANA



The future holds plenty of uncertainty for Chris Adams and Terry Taylor, but one thing appears definite: trouble. Following a series of bizarre events, the team of Adams and Taylor is on the verge of a rocky breakup that no amount of apologizing can prevent

Chris Adams Tells Terry Taylor: “IT’S NOT TOO LATE TO SAY YOU’RE SORRY!”



By the time Terry Taylor arrives at the arena, Chris Adams has already fought off a challenge for the UWF tag team belts they have since lost.

IT IS AN acknowledged fact of human anatomy that, except in horror movies, feet and legs don't move on their own. A slap of the hand requires some premeditated action by the person to which the

hand is attached. A kick of the foot demands that the individual swing his leg back and drive it forward. Terry Taylor knows this, so who's he kidding?

"It was just a mistake," says Tay-

lor of the incident that cost him and Chris Adams the UWF tag team belts. "It wasn't a conscious move, really it wasn't. I didn't realize what I was doing. Chris is just going to have to realize that we lost on a

stroke of bad luck, that's all. It's just too bad."

But was it just a mistake when Taylor showed up late to defend the UWF belts on March 22 in Fort Worth, Texas? And how about all those times when Adams looked to tag off and Taylor was looking the other way? Did he realize what he was doing then? If Terry Taylor weren't Terry Taylor, perennially one of the straightest men in wrestling, he would have been condemned a long time ago.

"I'm not sure what to say," says Adams, still confused by his partner's actions. "Certainly, I'm upset with the way Terry has acted over the past few months. It's just not like him. Maybe something's been going wrong. Maybe something's bothering Terry. Well, if Terry's reading this, I have one message for him: It's not too late to say you're sorry. We can talk it out like two mature adults."

Chris Adams is a forgiving person. He has to be. Late last year, he was convicted of assaulting an airline pilot and spent three months in a Texas jail. When Adams returned, he asked the fans and fellow wrestlers to put his past behind them. With the sole exception of Iceman Parsons, nobody has brought up Adams' jail sentence. Until now.

"I haven't said this yet, but I might as well since that's the way things seem to be going," says Taylor. "Chris is a different person since he's gotten out of jail. He gives the false front of being Mr. Good Guy, but we're talking about a man who spent three months *in jail*. There's no doubt that jail changed him. We just don't see eye to eye on things anymore. He's so suspicious. Maybe paranoid is the word."

Certainly, this is a different Terry Taylor we've been seeing, too. And the events of the past few months point this out clearly.

In mid-January, Hacksaw Duggan lost a loser-leave-town match to



Adams flips Sting (above) and executes a belly-to-belly suplex on Rick Steiner (below). Adams and Taylor had a strained relationship during their title reign. Taylor sometimes arrived late at matches, leaving Adams in a two-on-one or three-on-one situation.



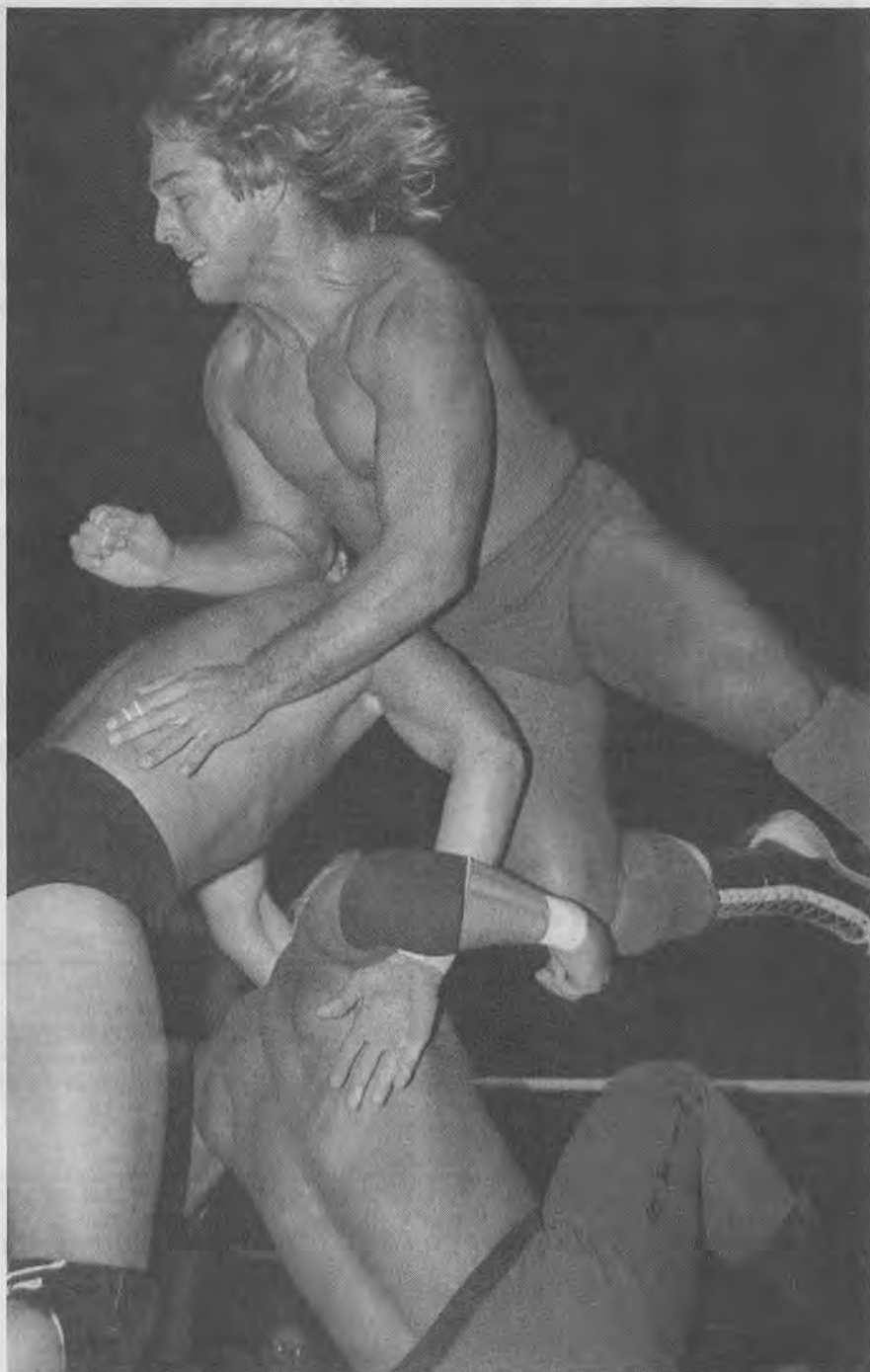
UWF champion One Man Gang. As a result, the tag belts held by Duggan and Taylor were declared vacant by UWF officials. Most people realized that Duggan didn't have any choice in the matter, but Taylor laid the blame fully on Hacksaw's shoulders. "My partner deserted me," Taylor said at the time.

On February 7 in Fort Worth, a tournament was held to fill the vacant title. Taylor teamed with Sam

Houston and lost to Sting and Rick Steiner in the semifinals. Adams and partner Iceman Parsons were on their way to the finals after beating Ted DiBiase and Steve Williams by countout, but a disagreement ensued: Parsons wanted to take the win, but Adams felt it was a cheap victory. Parsons lost a coin flip to decide which man would continue. Adams won the toss and chose Taylor as his new partner. Finally, Adams and Taylor defeated Sting and Steiner for the belts.

Things actually seemed to be going pretty well for the new tag champs during the following weeks. Adams and Taylor quickly developed into a near-perfect tag team, as solid a unit as had been formed in the UWF in some time. In fact, their scientific match against DiBiase and Williams in March is considered one of the best in UWF history.

Under the surface, however, things were going sour. This became apparent on March 22 in Tul-



Taylor tries to leap out of the way as Adams grapples with Sting. Taylor says Adams has been "suspicious" and "paranoid" since his release from jail. He believes he's been betrayed by two partners, Adams and Hacksaw Duggan. But Adams says Taylor is at fault for not showing responsibility.

sa, when Adams and Taylor were scheduled to defend their belts against Parsons and Sting. Taylor had not arrived by match time, and the UWF officials told Adams that unless he wrestled solo he would have to forfeit the title.

Adams' protests fell on deaf ears, but he wrestled superbly and held his own. As expected, however, he was finally triple-teamed by Parsons, Sting, and Eddie Gilbert.

Then, all of a sudden, Taylor ran into the ring wearing street clothes and carrying his suitcase. He cleared the ring, saving Adams from possible injury, and earned a disqualification for his partner.

"My plane was late," Taylor explained afterward. But Adams wasn't satisfied. "Tag team wrestling is an exercise in assigned responsibilities," Adams argued. "He should have taken an earlier plane and

made sure he was there. Terry and I are going to have to discuss this matter."

It looked like all was forgotten until April 12 at Atlanta's Omni where they defended the belts against Steiner and Sting. All four men were in the ring when Sting covered Adams for the pin. Eddie Gilbert was about to climb into the ring, but Adams pushed him away with his foot. Adams' foot was now draped over the bottom rope, but by this time the referee had already started the three-count.

The ref didn't see Adams' foot on the bottom rope, and he also didn't see a most remarkable incident:



Steiner and Sting double-team Taylor. It seems likely that Adams and Taylor will no longer be a team.

Taylor, who had been fighting with Steiner, kicked Adams' foot off the rope. The referee made the three-count, and Sting and Steiner had the belts.

What's next? What strange event will further endanger the already endangered alliance between Adams and Taylor? That's hard to say, but it won't take much to push this relationship over the edge. Adams and Taylor are on the verge of a stormy breakup, one that threatens to greatly affect both their careers.

Taylor says it's not too late for Adams to say he's sorry, but the reality of the situation is that the point of no return was passed a long time ago. The team of Chris Adams and Terry Taylor is yesterday's news. □

INSIDE WRESTLING'S OFFICIAL RATINGS

TOP 15

- 1—**HULK HOGAN**
302, Venice Beach, CA
- 2—**RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN
- 3—**RICK STEAMBOAT**
238, Honolulu, HI

- 4—**NIKITA KOLOFF**
275, Moscow, Russia
- 5—**BARRY WINDHAM**
236, Sweetwater, TX
- 6—**NICK BOCKWINKEL**
245, Beverly Hills, CA
- 7—**RANDY SAVAGE**
245, Sarasota, FL

- 8—**LEX LUGER**
268, Chicago, IL
- 9—**KEVIN VON ERICH**
239, Denton, TX
- 10—**STEVE WILLIAMS**
265, Norman, OK
- 11—**JAKE ROBERTS**
246, Stone Mountain, GA

- 12—**DUSTY RHODES**
302, Austin, TX
- 13—**TULLY BLANCHARD**
235, San Antonio, TX
- 14—**TERRY TAYLOR**
225, Vero Beach, FL
- 15—**BRAD ARMSTRONG**
226, Marietta, GA

NWA

- 1—**RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN
- 2—**NIKITA KOLOFF**
275, Moscow, Russia
- 3—**BARRY WINDHAM**
236, Sweetwater, TX

- 4—**TULLY BLANCHARD**
235, San Antonio, TX
- 5—**DUSTY RHODES**
302, Austin, TX
- 6—**LEX LUGER**
268, Chicago, IL
- 7—**MIKE ROTUNDO**
245, Syracuse, NY

- 8—**JIM GARVIN**
235, Tampa, FL
- 9—**BRAD ARMSTRONG**
226, Marietta, GA
- 10—**RIP OLIVER**
245, Tampa, FL
- 11—**WENDELL COOLEY**
220, Milton, FL

- 12—**RONNIE GARVIN**
231, Montreal, Quebec
- 13—**ARN ANDERSON**
249, Minneapolis, MN
- 14—**CARLOS COLON**
246, Bayamon, Puerto Rico
- 15—**BULLDOG BOB BROWN**
258, Kansas City, KS

AWA

- 1—**NICK BOCKWINKEL**
245, Beverly Hills, CA
- 2—**CURT HENNIG**
235, Minneapolis, MN
- 3—**LARRY ZBYSZKO**
248, Pittsburgh, PA

- 4—**GREG GAGNE**
220, Robbinsdale, MN
- 5—**OTTO WANZ**
369, Graz, Austria
- 6—**AUSTIN IDOL**
240, Las Vegas, NV
- 7—**JIMMY SNUKA**
251, Fiji Islands

- 8—**LEON WHITE**
375, Denver, CO
- 9—**KEVIN KELLY**
271, Oakland, CA
- 10—**D.J. PETERSON**
245, St. Joseph, MO
- 11—**SUPER NINJA**
263, Japan

- 12—**BAM BAM BIGELOW**
390, Mt. Laurel, NJ
- 13—**BORIS ZUKHOV**
254, Leningrad, Russia
- 14—**BRIAN KNOBBS**
278, Allentown, PA
- 15—**MR. SAITO**
247, Japan

WWF

- 1—**HULK HOGAN**
302, Venice Beach, CA
- 2—**RICK STEAMBOAT**
238, Honolulu, HI
- 3—**RANDY SAVAGE**
245, Sarasota, FL

- 4—**JAKE ROBERTS**
246, Stone Mountain, GA
- 5—**HARLEY RACE**
258, Kansas City, MO
- 6—**ADRIAN ADONIS**
313, New York, NY
- 7—**ANDRE THE GIANT**
497, Grenoble, France

- 8—**HERCULES HERNANDEZ**
265, Tampa, FL
- 9—**BILLY JACK HAYNES**
245, Portland, OR
- 10—**HACKSAW DUGGAN**
280, Glens Falls, NY
- 11—**BUTCH REED**
265, Kansas City, MO

- 12—**KOKO B. WARE**
229, Union City, TN
- 13—**BRUTUS BEEFCAKE**
273, San Francisco, CA
- 14—**THE HONKY TONK MAN**
255, Memphis, TN
- 15—**KAMALA**
402, Uganda

MOST POPULAR

- 1—**HULK HOGAN**
302, Venice Beach, CA
- 2—**NIKITA KOLOFF**
275, Moscow, Russia
- 3—**BARRY WINDHAM**
236, Sweetwater, TX

- 4—**RICK STEAMBOAT**
238, Honolulu, HI
- 5—**DUSTY RHODES**
302, Austin, TX
- 6—**CHRIS ADAMS**
228, Stratford on Avon, England
- 7—**JAKE ROBERTS**
246, Stone Mountain, GA

- 8—**KEVIN VON ERICH**
239, Denton, TX
- 9—**MIKE ROTUNDO**
245, Syracuse, NY
- 10—**JERRY LAWLER**
234, Memphis, TN
- 11—**JIM GARVIN**
235, Tampa, FL

- 12—**HACKSAW DUGGAN**
280, Glens Falls, NY
- 13—**BRAD ARMSTRONG**
226, Marietta, GA
- 14—**ED GANTNER**
269, Tampa, FL
- 15—**JIMMY SNUKA**
251, Fiji Islands

MOST HATED

- 1—**RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN
- 2—**ANDRE THE GIANT**
497, Grenoble, France
- 3—**RANDY SAVAGE**
245, Sarasota, FL

- 4—**TULLY BLANCHARD**
235, San Antonio, TX
- 5—**LEX LUGER**
268, Chicago, IL
- 6—**ADRIAN ADONIS**
313, New York, NY
- 7—**TERRY GORDY**
289, Chattanooga, TN

- 8—**CURT HENNIG**
235, Minneapolis, MN
- 9—**AUSTIN IDOL**
240, Las Vegas, NV
- 10—**DANNY DAVIS**
220, Dover, NH
- 11—**BUDDY LANDELL**
236, Los Angeles, CA

- 12—**NORD THE BARBARIAN**
316, Bozeman, MT
- 13—**KEVIN SULLIVAN**
252, Boston, MA
- 14—**ARN ANDERSON**
249, Minneapolis, MN
- 15—**HARLEY RACE**
258, Kansas City, MO

TAG TEAMS

- 1—**THE ROAD WARRIORS**
No. 2 contenders to NWA World tag title
- 2—**MANNY FERNANDEZ & RICK RUDE**
NWA World tag team champions
- 3—**BRETT HART & JIM NEIDHART**
WWF World tag team champions
- 4—**THE MIDNIGHT ROCKERS**
AWA World tag team champions
- 5—**RICK MARTEL & TOM ZENK**
No. 1 contenders to WWF tag team title

- 6—**STING & RICK STEINER**
UWF tag team champions
- 7—**THE FANTASTICS**
No. 1 contenders to WCCW tag team title
- 8—**THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS**
No. 1 contenders to U.S. tag team title
- 9—**THE M.O.D. SQUAD**
Florida tag team champions
- 10—**STEVE KEIRN & MARK STARR**
Mid-Southern International tag team champions

- 11—**THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS**
No. 1 contenders to NWA World tag title
- 12—**JERRY STUBBS & TONY ANTHONY**
Southeast Continental tag team champions
- 13—**S.T. JONES & ROCKY JOHNSON**
Mid-Southern tag team champions
- 14—**RIP OLIVER & MIKE MILLER**
Pacific Northwest tag team champions
- 15—**BRAD BATTEN & RICK McCORD**
Central States tag team champions

These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler... "Most Popular" and "Most Hated" ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and on mail that comes to our offices... Championships marked with asterisks on the "Roll Call of Champions" indicate title changes that have taken place since our previous issue... The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place.

For period ended April 29, 1987

ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

* ALABAMA CHAMPION: MR. WRESTLING II

(April 27, 1987; from Mike Golden; Birmingham, AL)

ALL-JAPAN ASIAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

SUPER STRONG MACHINE & ASHURA HARA

(October 30, 1986; from Takashi Ishikawa & Mighty Inoue; Aomori, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: JUMBO TSURUTA

(October 21, 1986; from Stan Hansen; Tokyo)

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE ROAD WARRIORS

(March 12, 1987; from Jumbo Tsuruta & Genichiro Tenryu; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MASANOBU FUCHI

(January 3, 1987; from Kuniaki Kobayashi; Tokyo)

ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP: GENICHIRO TENRYU

(April 26, 1986; tournament final over Ted DiBiase; Omiya, Japan)

ALL-PACIFIC WOMEN'S CHAMPION: LELANI KAI

(August 21, 1986; from Chika; Tokyo, Japan)

AWA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP: SHERRI MARTEL

(June 28, 1986; from Candi Divine; Oakland, CA)

AWA WORLD CHAMPION: NICK BOCKWINKEL

(June 29, 1986; awarded by default from Stan Hansen; Denver, CO)

AWA WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE MIDNIGHT ROCKERS

(January 27, 1987; from Buddy Rose & Doug Somers; St. Paul, MN)

BAHAMAS CHAMPION: TITLE VACANT

(most recently held by Bad News Allen)

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH CHAMPION: OWEN HART

(October 25, 1986; from Les Thornton; Edmonton, Alberta)

* CALGARY NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP: OWEN HART

(April 17, 1987; from Makhan Singh; Calgary, Alberta)

* CALGARY INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

BRUCE HART & BRIAN PILLMAN

(April 6, 1987; tournament final over Ron Starr & Cuban Assassin; Calgary, Alberta)

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER

(February 22, 1987; from Hercules Ayala; Montreal, Quebec)

* CANADIAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: PRETTY BOY SIMMES & RICHARD CHARLAND

(April 13, 1987; from Dan Kroffat & Armand Rougeau; Montreal, Quebec)

CENTRAL STATES CHAMPION: BULLDOG BOB BROWN

(February 27, 1987; from Bill Dundee; Kansas City, KS)

CENTRAL STATES TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: BRAD BATTEN & RICK MCCORD

(February 27, 1987; from The M.O.D. Squad; Kansas City, KS)

ENGLISH MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPION: FLYING FUJI YAMATA

(March 3, 1987; from The Black Tiger; Croydon, England)

EUROPEAN HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE: LEON WHITE

(March 22, 1987; from Otto Wanz; Denver, CO)

* FLORIDA CHAMPION: MIKE ROTUNDO

(April 18, 1987; over Sir Oliver Humperdink; Lakeland, FL)

FLORIDA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE M.O.D. SQUAD

(March 15, 1987; from Tracy Smothers & Steve Armstrong; Daytona Beach, FL)

INTERNATIONAL WRESTLING GRAND PRIX CHAMPION: ANTONIO INOKI

(June 19, 1986; tournament final over Dick Murdoch; Tokyo, Japan)

IWGP INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

AKIRA MAEDA & NOBUHIKO TAKADA

(March 26, 1987; from Keiji Mutoh & Shiro Koshinaka; Osaka, Japan)

IWGP JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SHIRO KOSHINAKA

(September 19, 1986; from Nobuhiko Takada; Fukuoka, Japan)

JAPANESE WOMEN'S CHAMPION: YUKARI OMORI

(August 23, 1986; from Devil Masami; Kawasaki, Japan)

* JAPANESE WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: YUMIKO HOTTA & HISAKO UNO

(April 15, 1987; tournament final over Lelani Kai & Judy Martin; Tokyo, Japan)

* MID-SOUTHERN CHAMPION: AUSTIN IDOL

(April 27, 1987; from Jerry Lawler; Memphis, TN)

* MID-SOUTHERN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: CHICK DONOVAN

(April 20, 1987; from Soul Train Jones; Memphis, TN)

* MID-SOUTHERN INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

STEVE KEIRN & MARK STARR

(April 27, 1987; from The Mercenaries; Memphis, TN)

* MID-SOUTHERN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: SOUL TRAIN JONES & ROCKY JOHNSON

(April 13, 1987; from Goliath & Big Bubba; Memphis, TN)

NWA JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: LAZOR-TRO

(March 7, 1987; from Denny Brown; Atlanta, GA)

NWA SIX-MAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE ROAD WARRIORS & DUSTY RHODES

(May 17, 1986; from Ivan & Nikita Koloff and Baron Von Raschke; Baltimore)

NWA TV CHAMPION: TULLY BLANCHARD

(November 27, 1986; from Dusty Rhodes; Greensboro, NC)

NWA WORLD CHAMPION: RIC FLAIR

(August 9, 1986; from Dusty Rhodes; St. Louis)

NWA WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: MANNY FERNANDEZ & RICK RUDE

(December 6, 1986; from The Rock 'n' Roll Express; Atlanta)

* PACIFIC NORTHWEST CHAMPION: RIP OLIVER

(April 18, 1987; from Ricky Santana; Portland, OR)

PACIFIC NORTHWEST TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: RIP OLIVER & MIKE MILLER

(March 6, 1987; from Ricky Santana & Cocoa Samoa; Portland, OR)

* PWF CHAMPION: STAN HANSEN

(April 24, 1987; tournament final over Hiroshi Wajima; Yokohama, Japan)

PWF TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: STAN HANSEN & TED DIBIASE

(as mandated by PWF wrestling officials)

* POLYNESIAN PACIFIC CHAMPION: SUPERFLY TUI

(April 11, 1987; from Super Machine I; Honolulu, HI)

POLYNESIAN PACIFIC TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

FARMER BOY IPO & LEROY BROWN

(August 9, 1986; from Mad Max & Super Max; Honolulu, HI)

* SOUTHEAST CHAMPION: DUTCH MANTEL

(April 13, 1987; from Exotic Adrian Street; Birmingham, AL)

* SOUTHEAST CONTINENTAL CHAMPION: WENDELL COOLEY

(April 27, 1987; from Buddy Landell; Birmingham, AL)

SOUTHEAST CONTINENTAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

JERRY STUBBS & TONY ANTHONY

(February 23, 1987; from The Nightmares; Birmingham, AL)

SOUTHEAST U.S. JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TOM PRITCHARD

(February 27, 1987; from Larry Hamilton; Knoxville, TN)

U.S. CHAMPION: NIKITA KOLOFF

(August 17, 1986; best-of-seven final over Magnum T.A.; Charlotte, NC)

(September 28, 1986; unification victory over National heavyweight champion

Wahoo McDaniel; Atlanta, GA)

U.S. TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TITLE VACANT

(most recently held by Dick Murdoch & Ivan Koloff)

* UWF HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BIG BUBBA ROGERS

(April 19, 1987; over One Man Gang; Muskogee, OK)

* UWF TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: STING & RICK STEINER

(April 12, 1987; from Terry Taylor & Chris Adams; Atlanta, GA)

UWF TV CHAMPION: EDDIE GILBERT

(March 8, 1987; from Savannah Jack; Tulsa, OK)

WORLD CLASS CHAMPION: KEVIN VON ERICH

(October 12, 1986; from Black Bart; Dallas, TX)

WORLD CLASS SIX-MAN CHAMPIONS: TITLE VACANT

(most recently held by Kevin, Lance, and Mike Von Erich)

WORLD CLASS TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TITLE VACANT

(most recently held by The Fantastics)

WORLD CLASS TV CHAMPION: TITLE VACANT

(most recently held by Tony Atlas)

WORLD CLASS TEXAS CHAMPION: TITLE VACANT

(most recently held by Dingo Warrior)

WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPION: THE FABULOUS MOOLAH

(November 25, 1985; from Wendi Richter; New York)

WORLD WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: LELANI KAI & JUDY MARTIN

(August 1985; from Desiree Petersen & Velvet McIntyre; Egypt)

WWF JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: FRANK LANCASTER

(March 14, 1987; from Invader III; Guaynabo, Puerto Rico)

WWF NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION: MIGUEL PEREZ JR.

(January 21, 1987; from Bob Heffernan; Catano, Puerto Rico)

* WWF NORTH AMERICAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

TONY ATLAS & MIGUEL PEREZ JR.

(April 25, 1987; from Bob Heffernan & El Gran Mendoza; Caguas, Puerto Rico)

WWF PUERTO RICAN CHAMPION: MIGHTY IGOR

(January 9, 1987; from Al Perez; San Juan, Puerto Rico)

* WWF TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE SHEPHERDERS

(April 4, 1987; from Chris & Mark Youngblood; Caguas, Puerto Rico)

WWF UNIVERSAL CHAMPION: CARLOS COLON

(September 21, 1986; tournament final over Terry Funk; San Juan, Puerto Rico)

WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: RICK STEAMBOAT

(March 29, 1987; from Randy Savage; Pontiac, MI)

WWF WORLD CHAMPION: HULK HOGAN

(January 23, 1984; from The Iron Sheik; New York, NY)

WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: BRETT HART & JIM NEIDHART

(January 26, 1987; from The British Bulldogs; Tampa, FL)

The Superpowers' Super Victory:

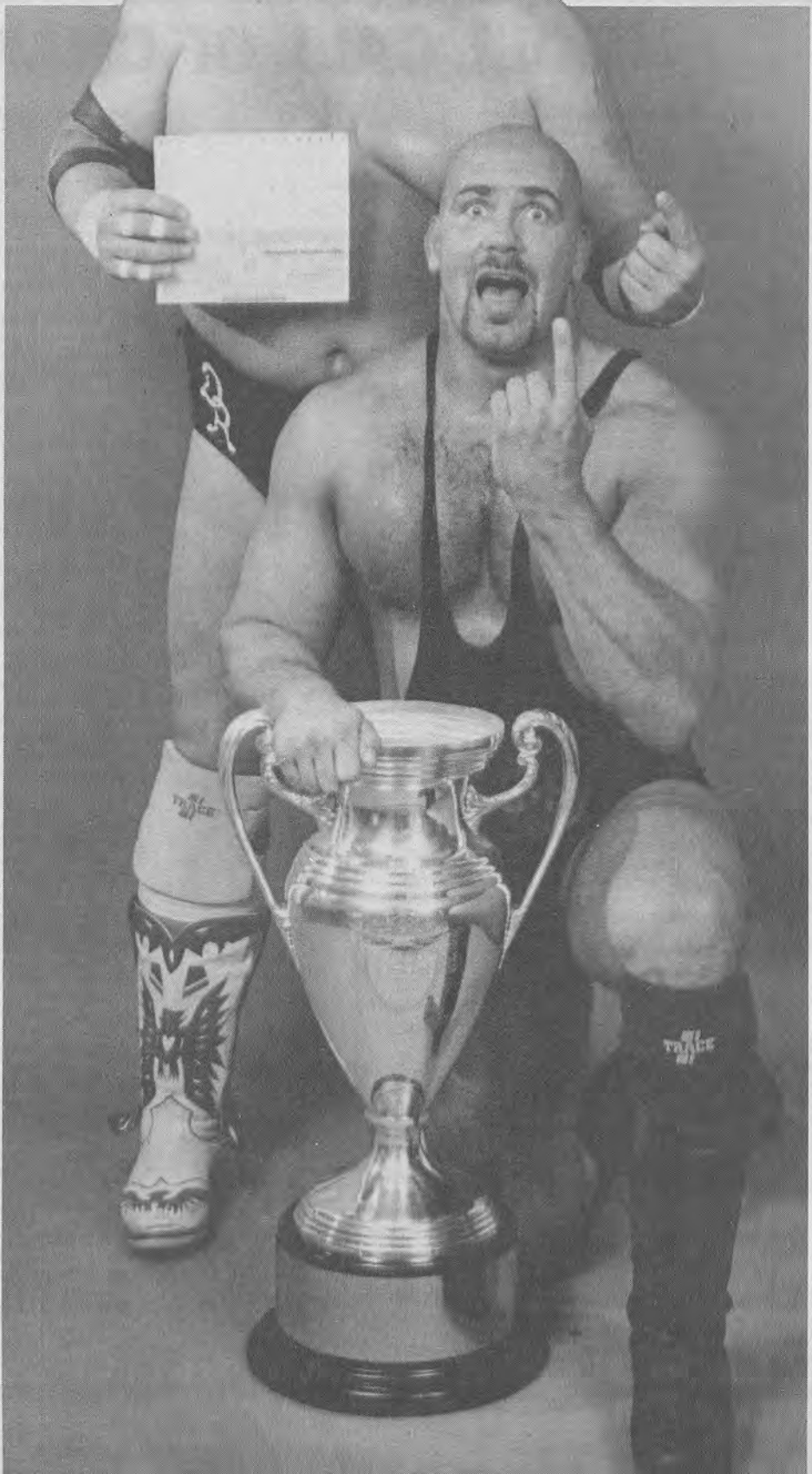
DUSTY WIN

Riding an incredible emotional wave brought on by the appearance of the recovering Magnum T.A., Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff combined forces to defeat Tully Blanchard and Lex Luger for wrestling's biggest prize: \$1 million and the silver Crockett Cup!

JUST MOMENTS BEFORE the start of the final match at the second annual \$1 million Jim Crockett Sr. Memorial Cup Tag Team Tournament, Terry Allen appeared in the dressing room runway. The crowd stood and roared, and the spotlight followed Allen as he slowly made his way to the ring. Then, at ringside, the man known as Magnum T.A. exchanged tearful embraces with Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff.

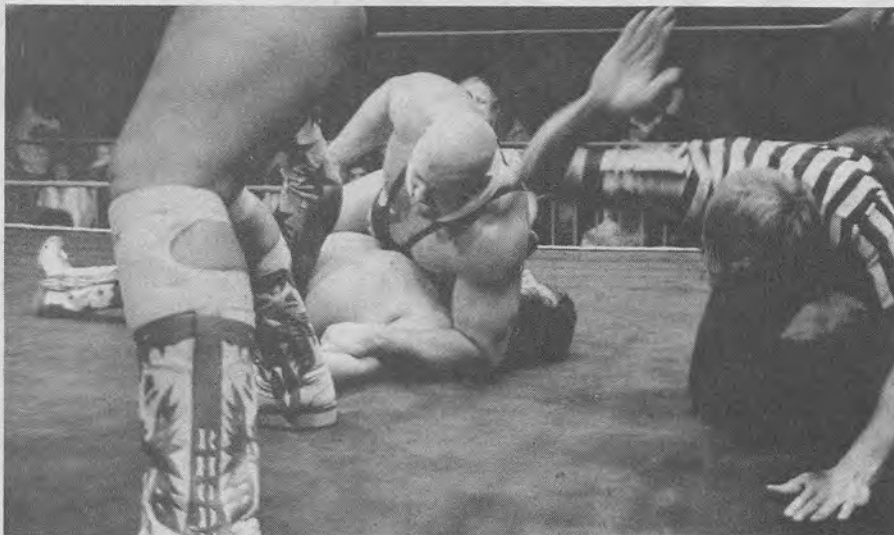
An incredible surge of energy powered through the Baltimore Arena. What strength Magnum T.A. still had—and the considerable willpower and emotional strength that he will always have—was transferred to The Superpowers during that brief exchange. Right then and there, Tully Blanchard and Lex Luger might as well have gone home.

Such a moment is rare—almost priceless—in professional sports. It is a time when the tide noticeably shifts, when something happens to make a team or an individual unbeatable. It happened to the United States Olympic hockey team in 1980. It happened to Sugar Ray Leonard in 1987. But rarely does



RHODES & NIKITA KOLOFF THE CROCKETT CUP!

Photos by Craig Peters



Nikita Koloff grasps the Jim Crockett Sr. Memorial Cup and Dusty Rhodes holds the \$1 million check they were awarded for winning the tournament (opposite page). Koloff pins Bill Dundee in a second-round match (above).

the tide shift so tangibly, so noticeably, as it did on April 11 in Baltimore.

Simply put, the team of Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff defeated Tully Blanchard and Lex Luger when Rhodes pinned Blanchard at 17:31. The veteran Rhodes executed a flying bodypress from the top rope to save his partner from a

Blanchard piledriver, then covered Blanchard for the pin.

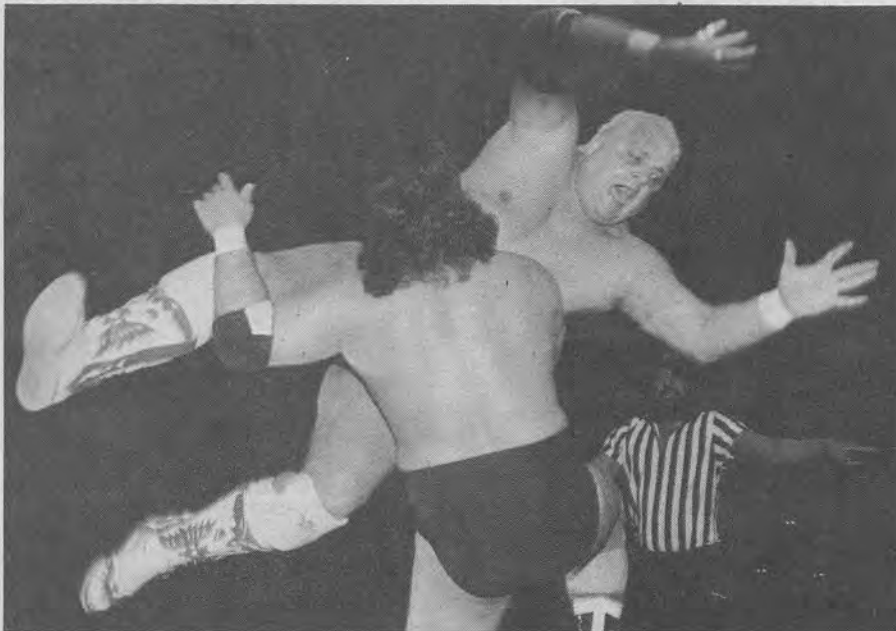
An event like the 1987 Crockett Cup tournament, however, can never be adequately described in such basic terms. This was a tournament with numerous twists and turns, a sporting event that defied reason again and again, then came up with an ending right out of Hol-

lywood. To wit:

- The Mulkeys, fresh off their victory over The Gladiators on WTBS' *World Championship Wrestling*, emerged as the underdog darlings of the crowd. But Denny Brown and Todd Champion ended Randy and Bill's hopes for an upset with an easy pin in the first round. Still, that didn't stop a fan at ringside from proudly displaying a sign proclaiming "Mulkeymania!"

- The Rock 'n' Roll Express withdrew from the tournament because of an eye injury suffered by Rick Morton. Robert Gibson had the opportunity to choose another partner but respectfully declined.

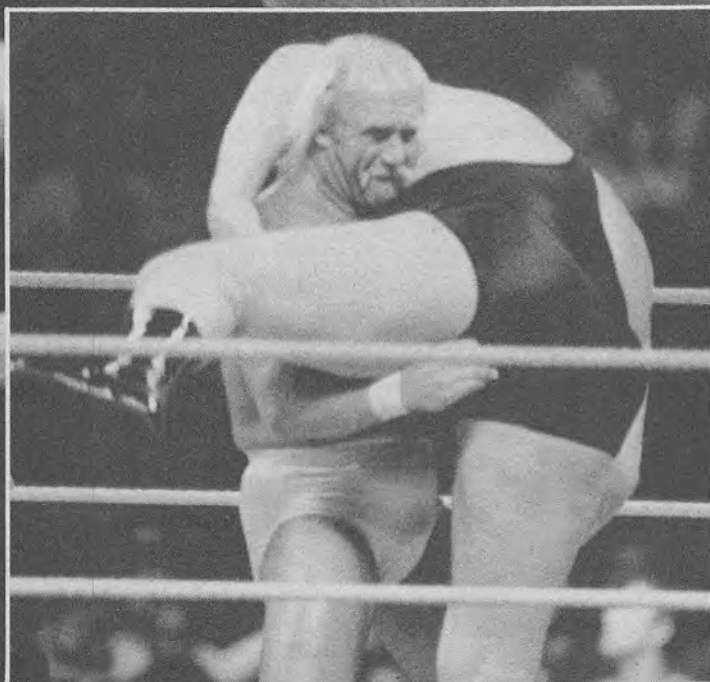
(Continued on page 54)



Rhodes performs a flying bodypress on Manny Fernandez (left). Rick Rude punches Rhodes off the top rope (above). Rude and Fernandez lost to The Superpowers in the tournament quarterfinals.

After Climbing The Highest Mountain... **WHERE DOES HULK HOGAN GO NEXT?**

In the wake of WrestleMania III we have to wonder: Has Hulk Hogan peaked, or will the WWF World champion discover new frontiers to conquer and new mountains to climb?



WWF champion Hulk Hogan gives Kamala an atomic drop (left) and lifts Andre the Giant up for a slam (above). Hogan reached new heights with his WrestleMania III victory.



TALK IS RAMPANT. Rumors of Hulk Hogan's retirement reverberate in locker rooms across America. "What else can he do?" the walls whisper. "He's beaten everyone there is."

The real question is: Can there be an encore to WrestleMania III?

Everyone is wondering how Hogan can top his defeat of Andre the Giant—a victory that ended Andre's career-long winning streak. Of course, the rumors of retirement are nonsense. While a win over Andre is a high mark on any resume, the Andre of today is more midget than giant. Andre's chronic weight problem, his advancing age, and a noticeable lack of fan support have essentially blanked a once-formidable talent.

For Hogan to retire on the basis of his latest victory would not exactly crown a sterling career. Despite the insufferable hype surrounding it, the match was a relatively easy victory for Hogan. In essence, all it took was a body-slam and a legdrop to clinch the victory. Certainly Hogan has had tougher battles against other opponents. The question remains, however: What else can The Hulkster do?

There are several possibilities. While Hogan has captured the hearts and minds of wrestling fans everywhere, were he to retire today the eyes of history would not claim him as one of the all-time greats. In order to qualify—to achieve parity with the Bruno Sammartinos, Lou Thesz, and Verne Gagne—Hogan must add substantially to his list of achievements.

Scientific Opponents

Hogan can start by wrestling scientific opponents, and there is a lengthy list awaiting him. For starters, how about Rick Steamboat, Tito Santana, Junkyard Dog, and Billy Jack Haynes? Every great champion has demonstrated his versatility by accepting *anyone's* challenge. Bruno fought Bobo Bra-

(Continued on page 62)

HOTSEAT

STAN LANE:

"JIM CORNETTE SAVED MY CAREER!"

WHILE FANS OF *The Fabulous Ones* are running around frantically, asking what in the world Stan Lane has done, the only question Lane seems to have is, "Why didn't I do this sooner?" To say that Lane's career has taken off recently is a gross understatement.

Everything has fallen into place perfectly for the South Carolina native. It all started when Steve Keirn, his *Fabulous Ones* partner, decided to go into semi-retirement and pursue a career in real estate. Lane then signed to wrestle with Jim Crockett Promotions while Keirn worked part-time in the Memphis area.

A reunion of *The Fabulous Ones* was originally planned for the \$1 million Jim Crockett Sr. Memorial Cup Tag Team Tournament, and there were indications that Lane and Keirn would team occasionally in Florida. Somewhere along the line, however, Lane decided that because Keirn would never return to wrestling full-time, he would have to make a decision on his own career.

That's when the decision was made for him. Trouble was brewing in the NWA, where manager Jim Cornette's mother decided that changes were in

order for the slumping *Midnight Express*. The problem: the *Express* was going backwards. The solution: fire Dennis Condrey. The replacement: Stan Lane.

Lane was quick to accept Cornette's offer. The *Midnight Express* is one of the most famous tag teams in the world, and Cornette has established himself as one of the best managers in

“

I'm here to do a job. My job is to help make The Midnight Express World champions. Why shouldn't we be the best?

”

the sport. And the Crockett Cup tournament, with its huge purse, was coming up fast. The timing couldn't have been better.

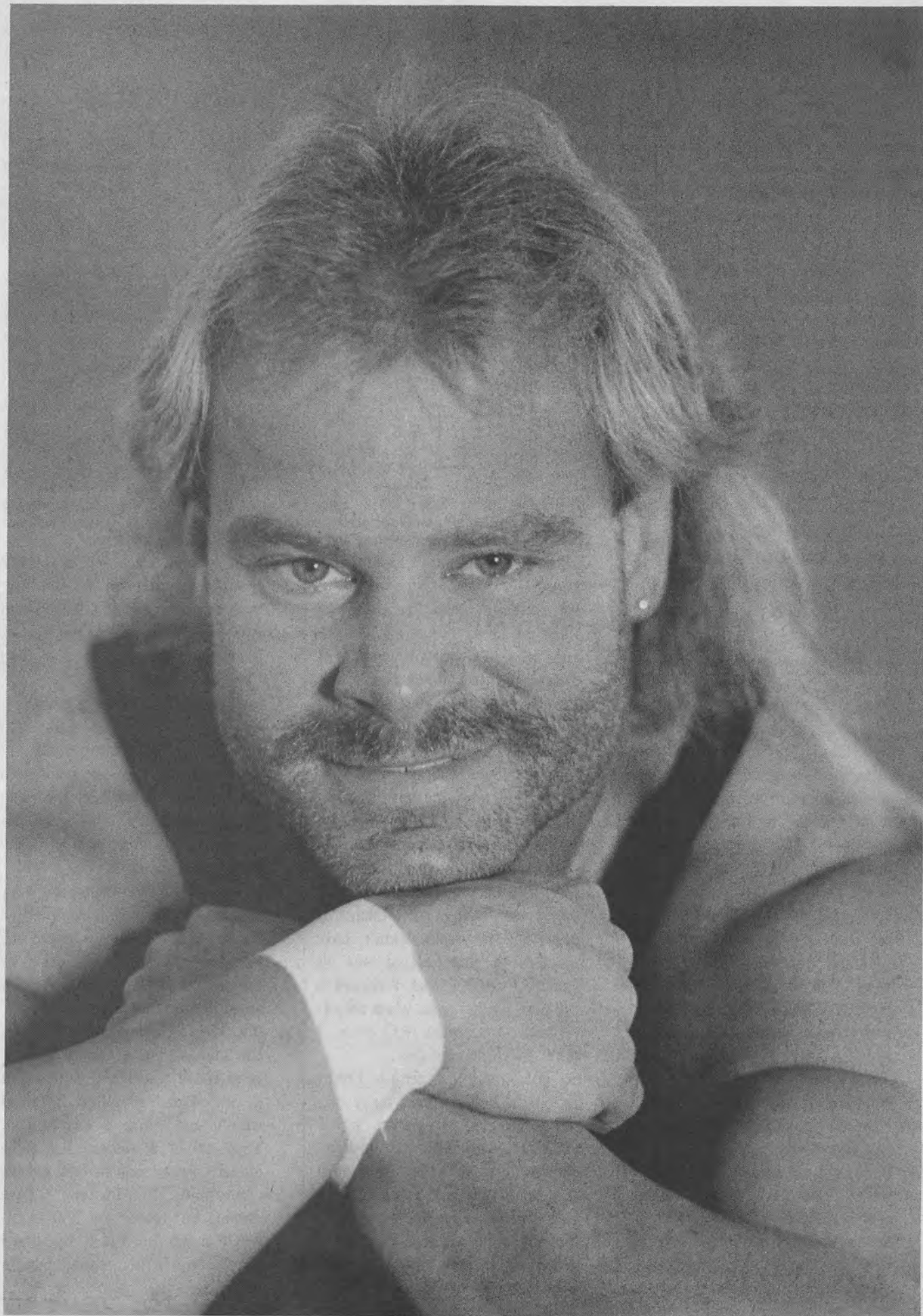
Although they had only been together for a week, the new *Midnight Express* went all the way to the semifinals of the Cup, defeating *The Road War-*

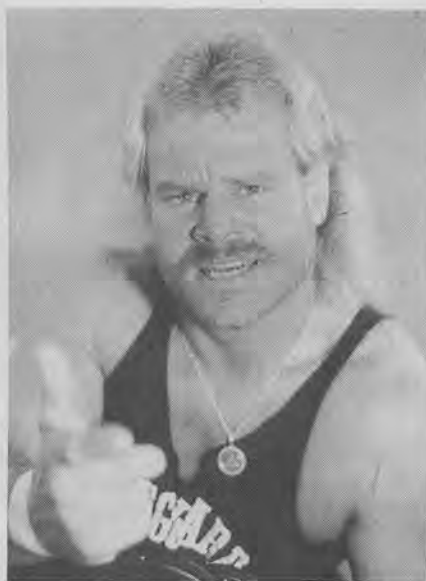
riors by disqualification to get there. *Inside Wrestling* Senior Editor Bill Apter was in Baltimore for the big weekend and had the opportunity to speak with Lane following the *Express'* elimination by Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff in the semifinals.

Q: Those last two bouts were incredible, Stan. I guess you'd have to call them a baptism by fire, so to speak.

A: Let me tell you this, Bill, I've been through some wars in my days, but this tournament was something else. I think me and Bobby [Eaton] and Jimmy [Cornette] showed Dusty and Nikita something tonight, and I know we showed *The Road Warriors* something tonight. We're not a team to be messed around with. Everyone's gonna have their hands full from here on out.

Q: You guys really seemed to be on a roll there. You defeated the Garvin brothers in the second round, and that was a pretty good accomplishment. It looked like you had Dusty and Nikita on the ropes until that Russian sickle flattened Bobby. How do you feel about your finish





“

If they're gonna to boo me, it doesn't really matter. The fans have nothing to do with what I'm out for. I'm looking to win, not to be loved.

”

in the tournament?

A: Well, Bill, we were in it to win and we didn't, so I can't be too pleased. When Jimmy first approached me to sign with The Midnight Express, he told me that he and his mother expected a winner and would accept nothing less. Well, we lost tonight, so that's not very good. But on the other hand, me and Bobby have only been wrestling together for about a week. When you look at it in that light, you'd have to say that we did pretty well. That million dollars sounded awfully good, though, and I'd say we have a great chance to win it next year.

Q: How do you like having Eaton as your partner?

A: Bobby's a pro in every sense of the word. Listen, I have nothing against Dennis Condrey, I think he's a fine wrestler, but I can see why they chose to get rid of Dennis instead of Bobby when they decided to make a change. Bobby



Stan Lane, Big Bubba Rogers, Bobby Eaton (standing), and manager Jim Cornette are the "new" Midnight Express. Lane replaced Dennis Condrey because Mama Cornette was not pleased with Condrey's performance and the team's recent lack of success.

knows the sport, don't let him fool you. He knows his opponents inside and out. Man, the things he filled me in on before each match you wouldn't believe. And he's tireless, he just doesn't give up. Plus he's an aerial daredevil. He's the best wrestler I've ever worked with.

Q: Including Steve Keirn?

A: I know, I know, the obvious comparisons to Steve have to come up. Listen, I love Steve Keirn. We were partners for many years, and I respect the decision he made. He's doing very well in real estate, so well that he really didn't have much of a choice. That was his choice. I realized that I needed a full-time partner, and when the offer came I accepted right away. I think Steve accepts that.

Q: So how about it, then, is Bobby Eaton the best partner you've ever had?

A: Okay. He's probably the most talented. He's definitely the most dedicated. Whether or not we work well together remains to be seen, but only time will tell. Bobby is a superstar, or else the Midnight Express would have never been NWA World tag champs. That's some-

thing me and Steve were never able to achieve, although we did very well together. You're talking about two different men. But yes, Bobby is probably the most talented man I've ever teamed with.

Q: Filling in for Dennis Condrey is not an easy task by any means. Do you feel any added pressure?

A: Absolutely not. My career has been great until now, but now it's going to get even better. This is an opportunity, not an ordeal. Dennis is gone and I'm in.

Q: How is Jim Cornette to work with? To many people, he's a loud-mouthed, whiny, spoiled rich kid who sits and pouts when he doesn't get what he wants. What are your feelings about Cornette?

A: Bill, Jim Cornette saved my career. I'm not saying I didn't have a good career, but I was getting into a rut. And with Steve gone, I wasn't sure where I was headed. Then, all of a sudden, Jim came out of nowhere and offered me the opportunity of a lifetime. I have nothing but respect for Jim Cornette. I'm grateful. I just hope that I can live up to his expectations.

Q: And his mother's.

A: Yes, and his mother's.

Q: Do you foresee that as a problem?

A: The way I see it, the ball's in my court. That's the way it is, Bill. I'm here to do a job. My job is to help make The Midnight Express World champions. If I'm not successful, maybe I don't deserve to stick around. We have the talent, more than any other team around, and we have a great manager. Why shouldn't we be the best?

Q: I guess if you look at it that way, it makes sense. Interestingly enough, since you've joined the team, the Express seems to have the fans on their side more than ever before. Any comments on that?



Road Warrior Hawk presses Lane, who says he's familiar with the Warriors' style from when he wrestled as one of The Fabulous Ones.

A: Yeah, well, the fans have always liked me, especially the women, and I appreciate that. But my priorities have changed. You know, in the past, my first priority was always following the rules and doing things for the fans. Now my first priority is winning, winning at all costs, because the only thing that matters is the bottom line. If the fans want to cheer me, it's their business. I still appreciate it. But if they're gonna boo me, it doesn't really matter. The fans have nothing to do with what I'm out for. I'm looking to win, not to be loved.

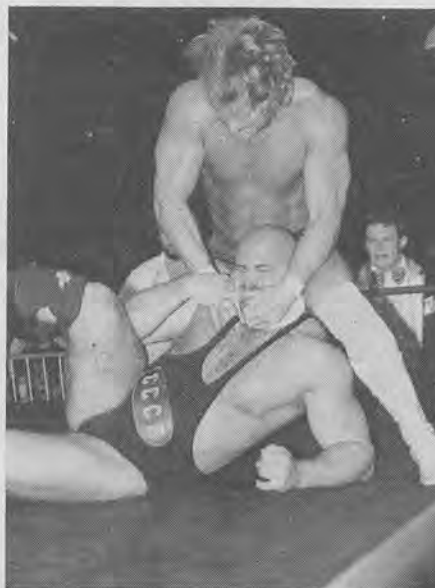
Q: That's certainly a change. Let's go back to the subject of The Road Warriors for a moment. As I recall, when you and Steve were in the AWA you had a pretty hot feud going with the Warriors.

A: The AWA, and down in Memphis, too, you'll remember. Those were some tough matches, Bill, and it was a great feud. Things may not have worked out for us well during that feud, but it's helped me out now. Coming into the Crockett Cup, I knew the Warriors like the back of my hand, just from our feuds before. I think that may be one of the reasons Jim chose me, because I was familiar with the Warriors' style. They're a tough team, I'm not going to deny that, and they're powerful men, but we're more well-rounded. We've got more of what it takes to be successful.

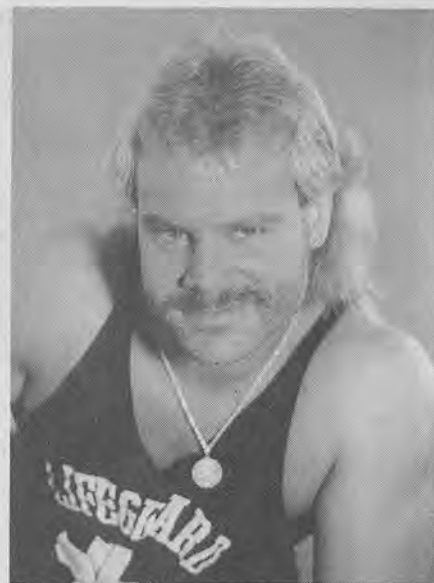
Q: Which is?

A: Skill. Wrestling ability. The Warriors know how to brawl and throw people around the ring. Well, it takes more than that to win. People are always asking why the Warriors aren't tag team champs. Well, it's easy. They can't wrestle. Bobby and I are wrestlers and we can brawl, too. It's very simple. We're a multifaceted team.

Q: There have been some rumors that



At Cornette's direction, Lane tries to rip Nikita Koloff's neckbrace off. Lane greatly respects Cornette.



“

My career has been great until now, but now it's going to get even better. This is an opportunity, not an ordeal. Dennis is gone and I'm in.

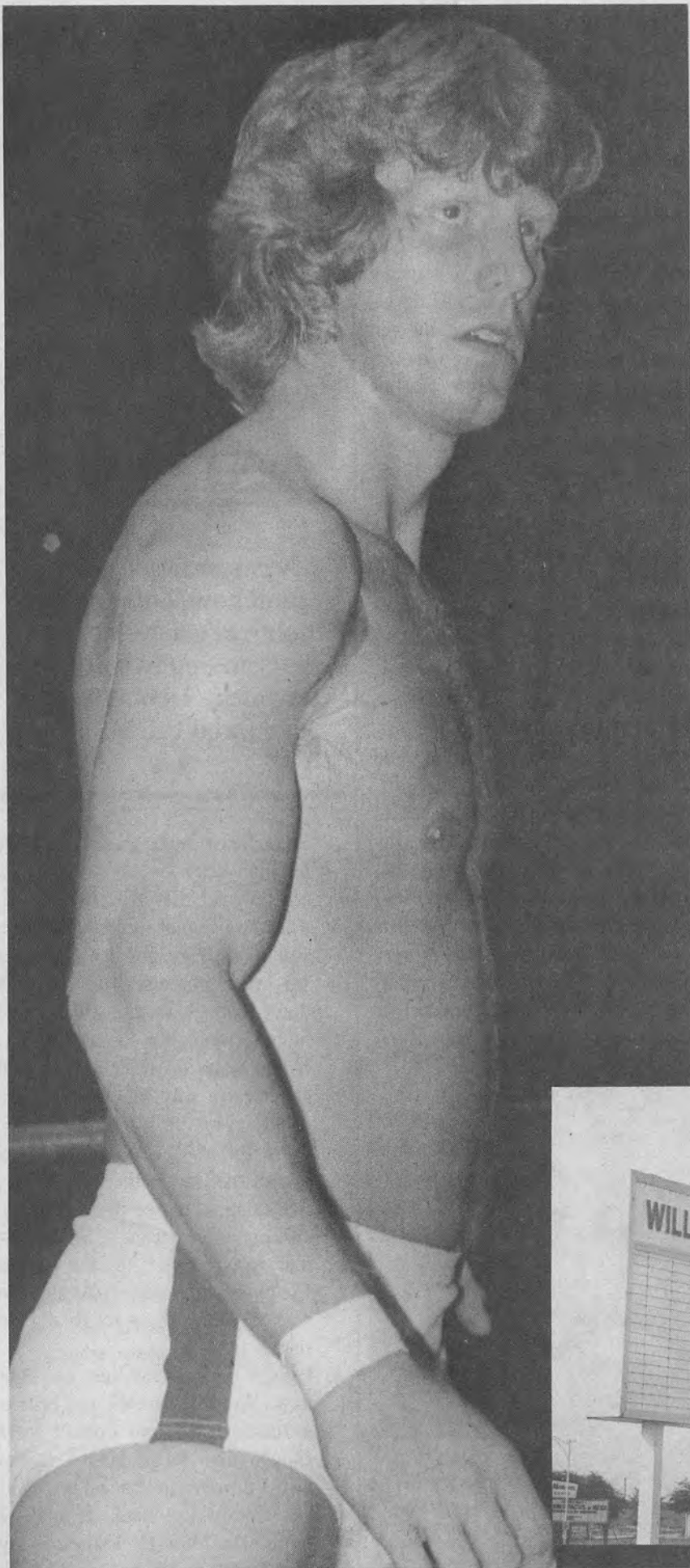
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Steve Keirn might team with Mike Graham down in the Florida area. How would that affect you?

A: That's a good question. How would it affect me? I don't really see what difference it makes. I don't think Steve and Mike would be any trouble for me and Bobby. If they want to wrestle us, fine, but I don't see why they would want to. Anyway, it would be a step down for us. We're looking to go up, all the way to the title. I don't think that would be the way to go.

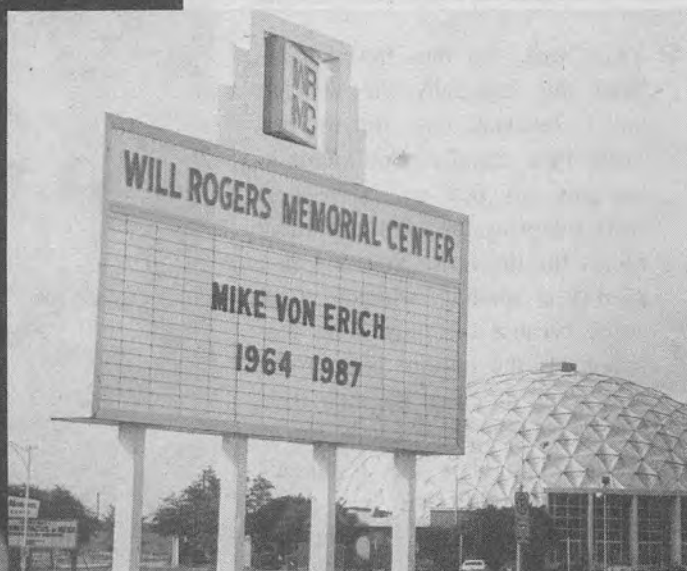
Q: Just one more question, Stan. Now that you're here in the World Championship area full-time, do you have any plans to go after a singles title?

A: I don't think so, at least not right now. Wrestling for the tag belts is a full-time job and doesn't leave enough time to go after a singles belt. I'd prefer to channel my energies toward the team. From here on in, The Midnight Express is my life. That's what I'm here for. □



*Suicide
Shocks
The
Wrestling
World:*

**MIKE
VON
ERICH
DEAD
AT 23**



The wrestling world was stunned to learn of the latest tragedy to strike the Von Erich family: the suicide of Mike Von Erich. Once destined for greatness, the pressure of his celebrity and the pain of a prior illness was his downfall



Kevin Von Erich consoles his mother, Doris, at the funeral of Mike Von Erich (above). Kerry Von Erich, and Kevin behind him (left), are escorted to the grave site.

By Dave Rosenbaum

MIKE VON ERICH was always supposed to be a superstar. From the time he was a young boy and wrestled in the 75-pound category for the Denton YMCA team and won several regional championships, to the time he first stepped into the professional ring at the age of 20, it seemed that Mike was destined for greatness.

His late brother David was a great star. Brothers Kerry and Kevin are

both looked on as great stars. His father, Fritz, is a wrestling legend. And Mike seemed to have all the tools, plus a little more. "Mike is the kind of guy," Kerry once said, "who always has to have an impossible goal. He needs to strive for something unattainable. That's what makes him a superstar."

Mike would win the World Class American title in 1984 and go on to be named Rookie of the Year in the *Pro*

Wrestling Illustrated fan poll. But his impossible goal was living up to his press clippings, living up to the Von Erich name, and, finally, overcoming his near-fatal 1985 bout with toxic shock syndrome. The tragic ending to his stormy life came on Sunday, April 12, in Lake Lewisville, Texas, when he took a lethal dose of the tranquilizer Placidyl. His body was found in a sleeping bag four days later.

At 23 years of age, Mike was the



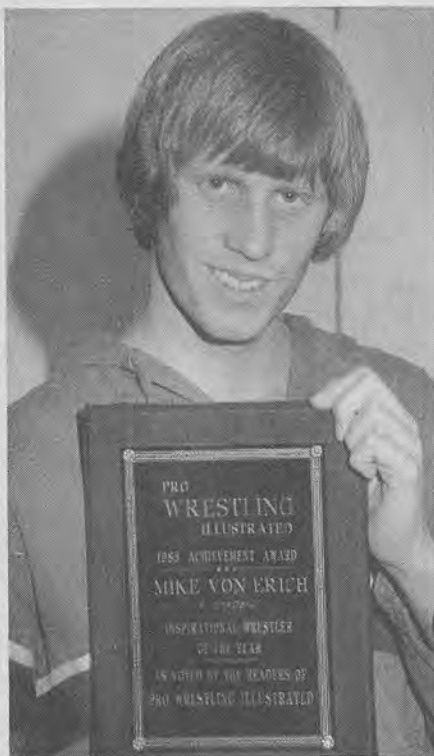
Fritz, Mike, Kevin, Chris, and Kerry Von Erich were excited after Fritz, Mike, and Kevin won the World Class six-man title in Texas Stadium at the David Von Erich Memorial Parade of Champions in 1984 (above). The readers of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* voted Mike 1985's Inspirational Wrestler of the Year (below).

third son of Fritz and Doris Von Erich to die at an early age. David died of an intestinal inflammation three years ago while on tour in Japan, and another son, Jack, died in 1959 when he accidentally electrocuted himself. The Von Erich family has lived through other tragic times: David's infant daughter's death in 1978, Kerry's near-fatal motorcycle accident last spring, and Mike's near-fatal bout with toxic shock syndrome. Mike's suicide was but the latest chapter in the family's lengthy history of tragedy.

"A lot of people have made their own little opinions about what made Mike kill himself, and there's one that I agree with," said older brother Kevin. "The toxic shock syndrome ravished his body. He was constantly in pain and he never recovered. It was like he was a different person after that."

"There was also the enormous pressure of living up to me and Kerry and the Von Erich name. The disease slowed him down. After he almost died, he never had the chance to live up to his expectations. If you ask me, though, it was more the pressure than the pain."

The series of events leading up to Mike's death began on Saturday morning, April 11, when he was arrested for driving while intoxicated, possession of a controlled substance, and possession



of two ounces of marijuana. He was released on \$3,500 bail at 3:30 that afternoon, and was last seen outside his apartment at 5 p.m.

In the interim, Mike spoke with his lawyer, Jerry Lofton. "He was concerned about the arrest, mostly about the publicity and the embarrassment it might cause his family," said Lofton. "He didn't seem overly concerned, however. He just showed a normal interest in what was going on."

That Saturday, he also contacted a doctor, who was a friend of the fam-



Mike valued the wrestling knowledge of Kevin (above) and Kerry (below), who have both suffered injuries in their own careers.

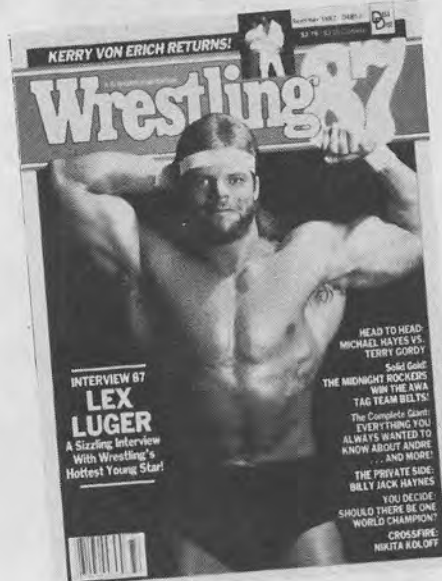


ily. "He told the doctor that he was in pain and asked for a prescription for Placidyl," said Kevin, who would not divulge the doctor's name. "The doctor filled the prescription because he thought Mike was hurting. But I have no doubt that he got that Placidyl because he wanted to kill himself."

Mike then drove to Pilot Knoll Park, a wildlife preserve in Lake Lewisville, where he parked his car and walked to a brushy sight about a mile away. There, Mike set up camp and, sometime on Sunday, took the Placidyl. It is unclear whether Mike
(Continued on page 64)

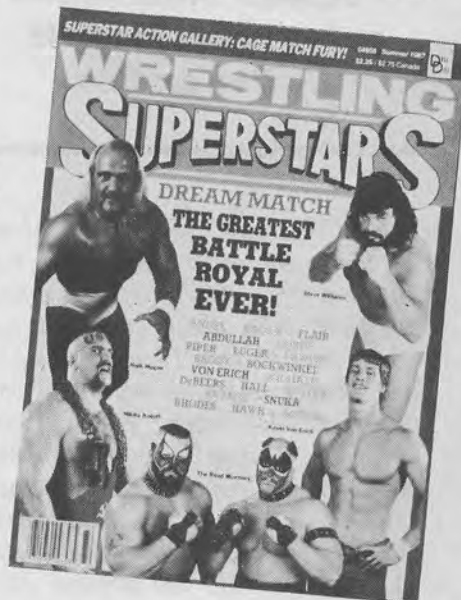
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The telephone wires sizzle every month as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. This is the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to see the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off ... One on One

ONE ON ONE



"I've had enough of you shooting off your mouth. We'll settle our differences in the ring. That's the only way to shut you up."

—Jerry Lawler

JERRY LAWLER AND Austin Idol were once friends, but not anymore. Now they're bitter enemies, embroiled in a dispute the roots of which trace back to December 1986—and threaten to stretch well into 1988.

In late December, Mid-Southern champion Lawler wrestled Tommy Rich for the rights to a title bout against AWA World champion Nick Bockwinkel. The referee stopped the match when Rich was bleeding profusely from a cut above his left eye, and the following week Lawler was scheduled to take on Bockwinkel.

Prior to the Lawler-Bockwinkel match, Austin Idol came to the ring and demanded the title shot. "You're being ridiculous," said Lawler, who was attacked by Idol only seconds later.

On January 11, Lawler, hoping to settle his dispute with Rich and Idol, gave both men shots at his Mid-Southern title on the same card. In the first match, Lawler was disqualified for tossing fire at Rich. Suddenly, Idol ran in and brutally attacked Lawler. Rich and Idol then teamed up to render Lawler nearly unconscious.

But they weren't finished. Idol and Rich dragged Lawler to one corner and wrapped his legs around the ringpost. Each man grabbed a leg and pulled Lawler into the post, severely damaging his groin. Lawler was out of action for several weeks and had to vacate his

Mid-Southern title. Idol and Rich were each fined \$5,000 for that incident. Idol subsequently won a tournament for the title on February 3 in Memphis by defeating Soul Train Jones in the final.

Since returning to action, Lawler has continued his feud with Idol and Rich. But things really heated up on April 23 in Memphis, when Lawler regained the Mid-Southern title from Idol. A hair vs. hair rematch in a cage was scheduled for April 27, during which Idol regained the title and Lawler's head was shaved bald with the help of Rich—who scrambled out from under the ring! It was a low moment in the career of "The King," and one of Idol's greatest achievements. It also intensified the feud between these two bitter rivals.

Inside Wrestling, always looking for an opportunity to help wrestlers settle

their differences, brought Idol and Lawler together, "One on One." Unfortunately, this chilling exchange did little to bring the men closer together. Now, their rift might be permanent. Read on.

AUSTIN IDOL:

Oh, my man Jerry Lawler, what a wonderful time we had in Memphis, didn't we? "The King" has lost his crown, so to speak. Sort of like the story of the emperor's new clothes, when the king was seen to be naked, right? Now, "The King" is seen to be bald! It's a great day for Mid-Southern wrestling!

JERRY LAWLER:

And it'll be a great day for Mid-Southern wrestling when I get rid of you, Idol. You may have won this battle, but I'll get the last

N ONE



"Face it, Lawler, your time is gone. Every king's reign comes to an end, and yours is history. I'm the new ruler."

—Austin Idol

laugh, just like I always do. The King will always reign over Memphis!

AI: What last laugh? This is it, buddy, this *is* the last laugh, and it's at your expense! *Hahaha!*

JL: You gotta be kidding, Idol, if you think this is the last you've heard from me. That Mid-Southern title is mine, buddy, and it's just on loan for now. You ask anybody around here and they know who rules Mid-Southern wrestling. That's me, Jerry Lawler, the "King of Wrestling," and the fact that I might be missing a little hair up top has nothing to do with it. To tell you the truth, I think I look pretty good with my hair short.

AI: With your hair *gone*, you mean! Face it, Lawler, your time is gone. Every king's reign comes to an

end, and yours is history. There is a new king ready to ascend the throne, and I'm it, buddy, I'm the new ruler of Mid-Southern wrestling! This belt proves it, and the humiliation you suffered at the hands of yours truly and my man Tommy Rich proves it as well.

JL: Speaking of which, Idol, you've once again proven that you have absolutely no regard for the rules. Just once, just one time in my life, I'd like to see you do something on your own, without somebody like Rich backing you up. What's the matter, Idol? Don't you have the guts to go it alone? Or is it that you just don't have what it takes?

AI: Go it alone? How about you and Bigelow? Talk about hiding behind someone, Lawler, you been

hiding behind that big goon Bigelow for longer than you should be proud of. A so-called legend hiding behind a rookie. Big man, you are. Big man.

JL: You're stupider than you look, Idol. Nobody's doing any hiding at this end, Idol, 'cause I'm ready to take on you, Rich, and even that goon manager of yours, Paul Dangerly. But Bam Bam's coming back, boy, and man, will you ever be in trouble. Remember what happened to Rich the last time Bam Bam and me got hold of him? Well, I've got some news for you, Idol. You're next.

AI: See what you're saying? That's exactly what I mean. You're hiding behind Bam Bam. You're nothing but a bald-headed coward hiding behind a bald-headed goon. But the goon's one up on you, Lawler, at least he's got tattoos covering his brain. Actually, you're a perfect match: He's got flames on his head, and you've got a lot of hot air!

JL: How poetic, Idol. You've really got a way with words. It's amazing how perceptive you are . . .

AI: And pretty, too. It is amazing, isn't it? Amazes me sometimes.

JL: . . . but you don't even realize that you and Rich have *never* done anything on your own. You came into the ring that night in January and started complaining, and you haven't done anything else since. You do a lot of talking for somebody with so little talent. I know your style, Idol: injure a guy, get him at a disadvantage by breaking the rules, then go in for the kill. Well, that can only work for so long, and I'm catching up to you.

AI: Hey, brother, I've got your hair, I've got your belt, and I've got your fans. You're history in Memphis. History long, long gone. "The King" is dead, long live "The Universal Heartthrob!"

JL: "The Universal Jackass," if you ask me. Listen, I've had enough of you shooting off your mouth. We'll settle our differences in the ring. That's the *only* way to shut you up. □

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SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from page 6)



Bill and Randy Mulkey are developing quite a following in the World Championship area. Jeff Sharkey hopes the Mulkeys will be taken seriously.

MULKEY MAGIC

Up until March 28, 1987, I was certain of three things: death, taxes, and the Mulkey twins losing wrestling matches. Now, I'm confused. Was it my imagination, or did Bill and Randy Mulkey score a victory over the much-hyped Gladiators, who are allegedly a top-rated tag team?

Let's face facts. The biggest thing that Bill Mulkey had done previous to this was taking a swipe at Jim Cornette and getting implanted into the canvas by Bubba Rogers as a result. And Randy Mulkey will always be known as the grappler who walked right into a belly-to-belly suplex from Baby Doll.

What's next? Maybe they can take on the David Crockett-Tony Schiavone lookalike tag team, Mike Jackson and George South. How about traveling to the WWF and challenging Bob and Joe Marcus for the unofficial twin tag team titles?

The Mulkey twins have languished for too long amongst the mediocre likes of Vernon Deaton, Mark Flem-

ing, Randy Barber, and others. With this big win under their belts, the possibilities are endless as to what they can come up with for an encore.

Hopefully, the Mulkeys can continue their winning ways, and perhaps people will stop taking Randy and Bill so lightly.

JEFF SHARKEY
Hortonville, WI

THE REAL PAT TANAKA

We are fans of Pat Tanaka, and every week we listen to him and Downtown Bruno talking about running Jeff Jarrett out of the Memphis area. We wish that Bruno and Pat would shut up and do the job.



Pat Tanaka has joined Downtown Bruno's camp in an effort to run Jeff Jarrett out of Memphis.

The reason is that we think that Jeff cannot wrestle any better than Downtown Bruno does when he wrestles Miss Emily Arthur. Pat Tanaka is a polite person, even though we cannot say so for the other wrestlers. We also wish that Pat would let his pictures be sold and that he would sign autographs. We would like to ask people to please give Pat the break that he deserves.

We, however, do not like Downtown Bruno or his other men. Down-

(Continued on page 50)

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SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from page 49)

town seems unable to take care of himself even when he wrestles against a lady. His men are always jumping into his matches when he is going against Emily Arthur. He is lucky if he wins a match, because that would mean that the referee did not catch one of his men interfering.

BOBBIE M. HALE
TINA M. KLINGEL
New Albany, MS

CROCKETT CUP

To me, the Crockett Cup in Baltimore proved only one thing: Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff are the luckiest wrestlers in the entire world. I'm not saying that they didn't deserve to beat Tully Blanchard and Lex Luger, but after The Rock 'n' Roll Express dropped out and The Road Warriors were unfairly eliminated, Nikita and Dusty had to win.



Nikita Koloff and Dusty Rhodes were lucky to win the Crockett Cup tournament, writes Jeffrey LeGraffe.

Talk about eliminating your competition! When all is said and done, the Rock 'n' Rolls and the Roadies were the two best teams entered in the tournament. Don't tell me about Rick Rude and Manny Fernandez. Rude is a good singles wrestler but doesn't know much about tag teams. Manny is just fat and slow. I don't know how they ever won the belts. As for the new Midnight Express, well, how could anybody expect them to win when Stan Lane and Bobby Eaton had only been wrestling together for about a

week?

Now that it's over, though, I'd just like to say that there were some very exciting matches in the Crockett Cup tournament. Also, the Ric Flair-Barry Windham match was great, and it sent a tingle through my spine to see Magnum T.A. walk down the aisle. All in all, it was a great event. But Dusty and Nikita? Give me a break!

JEFFREY LeGRAFFE
Washington, DC

LONELY LUGER

Where does that old fossil Matt Brock get off writing what he did about Barry Windham in your otherwise great May 1987 issue ("Plain Speaking")?



J.J. Dillon and Lex Luger are on their way to another arena. Gary Graham writes that Luger has always needed someone to guide his career.

Check the records, Brock. Luger has always needed career guidance. First it was Percy Pringle. Then Bob Roop. Then he jumped ship and formed a team with Barry. Soon after, Lex did something he hardly did before: wrestling maneuvers! I think the only reason Luger came to the World Championship area was because he had nobody left to guide him. Ah, poor Lex! Barry's certainly not scared of Luger being on the "other side," like Brock reasoned. He doesn't know the meaning of fear.

I really hope Barry takes Flair's title now, because while Luger is trying to be Ric Flair, instead of beating him, he'll be left eating Barry's dust. *Bon appetit*, Lex!

GARY GRAHAM
S. Zanesville, OH ☐

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DRESSING ROOM DOOR

(Continued from page 10)

"Let me ask you this," said Denton County Justice of the Peace Hubert Cunningham, another friend of the Von Erich family. "If you laid in the hospital with 107 degree temperature, don't you think that might cook something? The pain was really terrific. I think he was still in pain."

"Toxic shock syndrome seemed to affect his decision-making process. His liver and kidneys weren't working right. His respiration wasn't right. His behavior differed drastically before and after, but he was always a very nice, very giving, very gentle person."

How giving? "I really didn't know until after he died," said brother Kevin, who probably didn't realize what a sad statement he was making. "We found out after he died that he was giving money to many needy people around him. There was a lady nearby whose husband had left her and her two kids, and we didn't know it, but Mike was paying rent for her every month."

"I don't know if Mike really ever projected the way he really was," Kevin continued. "He was a caring person, he really cared. Knowing the pain he was in, it's probably a blessing that he took his life. There was just so much pressure and pain."

And, if one is to believe that Mike was a different person after his bout with toxic shock syndrome, one then has to believe that the pressure had everything to do with the pain. He was a Von Erich, meaning that he was born famous and would have to live up to the family name. He had three talented brothers to live up to—Kevin, Kerry, and David—and an even more famous father, Fritz.

"Being a Von Erich, there's just so much pressure," said Holder. "There's a Von Erich mystique



Mike huddles with Kevin and Kerry in a match shortly before Mike's bout with toxic shock syndrome.

that is hard to understand." Mike was always supposed to be a great star, but his body and mind never recovered from toxic shock syndrome. He never had much of a chance.

"He wanted to be like me and Kerry," said Kevin, "and he tried so hard, but he just didn't get the results because of what the disease did to him."

Then, of course, there were the battles with the law. He was recently found not guilty of assaulting an emergency room doctor, but the case drew tremendous publicity and embarrassed Mike. "That Mike was even on trial was a complete miscarriage of justice," said Lofton. "It was an absurdity. He was overwhelmingly not guilty, and he wouldn't have been on trial if he wasn't a Von Erich."

Then, the day before his death, Mike was arrested for driving while intoxicated, possession of a

controlled substance, and possession of two ounces of marijuana. "Mike's life could have been saved if the cop who had arrested him just gave me a phone call," said Kevin. "I would've come and gotten him, and maybe nothing would've happened."

But it did. "You have to understand that a good guy hurts worse when he screws up," says Holder. "Some people would say, 'To hell with it,' but this really hurt him. People just don't get picked up on a DWI and end their life. His failure to cope was what was really killing him. He called his mother after he got out of jail—she didn't know what had happened—and she said, 'Don't worry, it's nothing. I understand.' But Mike said, 'You don't understand. It is something.'

"He didn't want to embarrass his family. He loved his parents. Mike really struggled with his beliefs, and he was having a hard time coping. I guarantee you, the biggest fight of Mike's life wasn't in the ring. It was trying to handle what was happening to him, because Mike was a good guy."

There are probably plenty of people who have no sympathy for Mike Von Erich. Certainly, there are those saying, "What a stupid kid, taking his own life when he was so young," and "How can we be asked to have sympathy for a man who drank and drove and had drugs in his car?"

But if we can somehow try to imagine the physical pain that Mike Von Erich was going through, the emotional pain of not living up to the Von Erich family image, and the pressure he went through for almost two years, we might be able to understand why Mike Von Erich did what he did, and why he took his life.

Sadly, it doesn't make this any less tragic. □

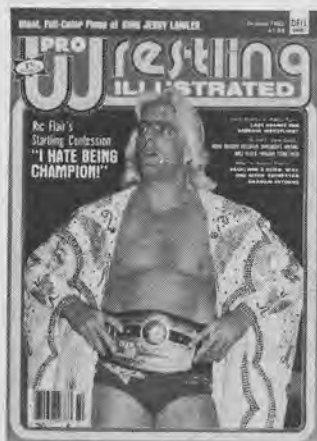
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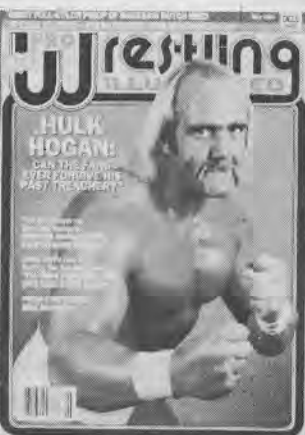
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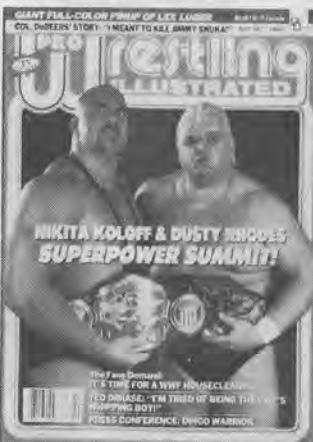
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THE SUPERPOWERS

(Continued from page 35)

Loyalty runs deep in the Rock 'n' Rolls.

• The new Midnight Express showed that they are an immediate force to be reckoned with. Stan Lane, who has replaced Dennis Condrey, displayed outstanding talent and the ability to work with Bobby Eaton. The Midnight Express went all the way to the semifinals, where they were eliminated by Rhodes and Koloff.

• Defending champions The Road Warriors, still steaming over not being made the number one seed, were eliminated at 11:28 of their quarterfinal match against The Midnight Express. Animal was disqualified after he stole Jim Cornette's tennis racket, and Cornette later threw fire at Animal. Afterward, the fallen Warriors proclaimed, "The Midnight Express are dead meat!"

• NWA World tag team champions Rick Rude and Manny Fernandez, the tournament's number-one seed, were upset by The Superpowers in the quarterfinals. Rhodes rolled up Fernandez for the pin at the 9:40 mark to win the match and severely damage the champions' reputation.

• The Japanese team of Giant Baba and Isao Takagi went all the way to the semifinals, with generous thanks to byes in the first and third rounds. The deliberate, scientific style of the Japanese team was ineffective, however, in a semifinal loss to Blanchard and Luger. They returned to Japan in defeat, having impressed no one.

• And, finally, after a grueling semifinal victory over The Midnight Express, Rhodes and Koloff derived new energy from the presence of Magnum T.A. The crowd was stirred and the match was fast-paced. Watching the match on a dressing room monitor, Magnum T.A. said, "Nikita has touched my life. I hope that I have



Koloff throws Stan Lane during the semifinal bout (above left). In the most touching moment of the tournament, Magnum T.A. hugs Rhodes before embracing Koloff (above right). Magnum's presence inspired The Superpowers to victory.



Tully Blanchard applies a chinlock on Koloff. Blanchard and Lex Luger squared off against Koloff and Rhodes in the final match.

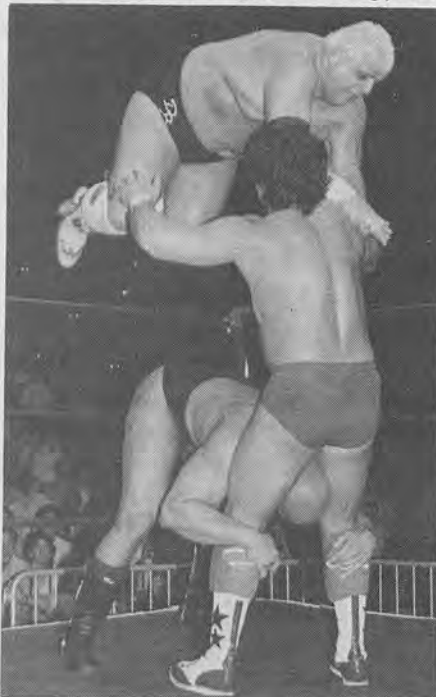
touched him in a positive way, too."

He obviously had. And, in doing so, he helped turn the Crockett Cup into a Magnum T.A. tribute. The experts can talk about the outstanding abilities of Rhodes and Koloff: Rhodes, the veteran, with his ring savvy and overall knowledge of the game; Koloff, the young superstar, with his incredible strength and brawling ability. They make a formidable team, to be sure.

But they would have never been together if not for Magnum T.A. This was a team forged out of

Nikita Koloff's commitment to carry on the cause of his once-hated rival. As an athlete, Koloff recognized the tremendous skill and desire of Magnum; although fierce competitors, they had gained much respect for each other, a situation not unusual in sports.

So, after Magnum's tragic automobile accident, Koloff announced his intentions to fight for Magnum



The winning pinfall: Before Blanchard pile-drives Koloff, Rhodes catches him with a flying bodypress. Rhodes was, in fact, the legal man in the ring.

T.A. on the side of Dusty Rhodes. They called themselves The Superpowers. And despite protests from his uncle Ivan Koloff and the Soviet government, Nikita carried on. Over time, The Superpowers developed into an impressive team. Going into the Crockett Cup tournament, they were the number-two seed.

Still, who could have thought that this already amazing story would have such an improbable chapter? Russian and American, former enemies, join together despite the protests of the Soviet government and win the richest tournament in professional wrestling. Ridiculous! Totally improbable!

And then again, the idea of Magnum T.A. even standing on his own two feet and walking to the ring aided only by a cane was more than improbable five months ago. It was absolutely preposterous. It couldn't happen. But it did. Magnum walked to the ring, embraced his Russian friend, and a tear came to his eye. Then the Russian and the American proved that the two countries could, indeed, work together toward a mutual goal.

At times, wrestling can teach great lessons. This was one of those times. □

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ON ASSIGNMENT

(Continued from page 18)

ago. The initial shock of his accident was riveting. How ... why? ... could such a thing happen? Yet, despite the grim prognosis—critically injured, possibly paralyzed for life—hope was ever present. Magnum *was not dead*. I knew that only the cold, irreversible sentence of death could stop Magnum. Save me your sorrowful tales of the tragic accident that saw Magnum's Porsche lose control and slam into a utility pole. File away your morbid diagnoses. Magnum *was alive*. He would find a way out of this mess. This I truly believed.

Two months ago, trying not to cry, I sat beside Magnum. On the road for several weeks, I had not seen him, and was unprepared for the visit. His legs seemed to have shrunk; his shoulders were somewhat more bony, giving him a gaping, storkish appearance. His face was ashen and lined—despite medication, he had not been sleeping well. It was hard to think of him as an athlete.

He asked how I was doing; that passed quickly. He asked me why I decided to visit him. His appearance had shaken me tremendously. What did I expect, you might ask. The man had been in a near-fatal car collision. He was lucky to be alive. But the man seemed to me to be losing vitality—and that was frightening.

"I've got my mind on a Magnum update," I told him. "How you're doing, what're your plans, how life has been treating you. An inspirational piece on the business of character—how one elevates oneself beyond pain and endures. Upbeat. Optimistic.

"You know," I said unconvincingly, "a typical Magnum T.A. story."

Magnum didn't take the bait. For one horrible moment I thought he might cry—and if he did, I

might have fled. He didn't. "I don't feel very Magnum today, Liz. You understand."

We spoke in muted tones for 10 minutes more. When I stood up to leave, I searched his eyes for a trace of the old vitality. A spark. *Anything*. I couldn't be sure. "Magnum," I said, "you're worth a thousand of most other people." I don't know why I said it. I think it's a line from *The Great Gatsby*. It seemed appropriate at the time, and it made me feel better.

I was not surprised as I watched Magnum T.A. emerge from the dressing room and walk



It is time for Magnum to start realizing his own dreams and not to dwell on what might have been, Liz Hunter writes.

under his own power to the ring in The Baltimore Arena during the recent Crockett Cup Tag Team Tournament. As he and Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff embraced at ringside, I thought back to the day at the hospital. It's likely Magnum will never wrestle again. If he does, it seems impossible he will be able to recapture many of his old skills.

That day in the hospital was like visiting an ancient ruin. I paid homage to the old Magnum, and prayed for his return. Perhaps that

is what made Magnum so sad. When he closes his eyes he sees the old Magnum, the youthful warrior, the ring virtuoso. But it is a false image, existing only in opposition. It is an image that retains life the way a pressed flower presents the memory of a spring idyll. It's like drinking nostalgia. For Magnum it was a troubling, deceiving image.

To accomplish what he has (make no mistake: Magnum's slow shuffle to the ring in Baltimore was the crowning achievement of his life), it was necessary for Magnum to accept the accident and its consequences. To bury the old Magnum, but never to relinquish the dream of a new one. And never—*never*—to lose the hope and determination of what could, of what *must*, be.

That night in Baltimore, Magnum T.A. answered many of our dreams; now it's time for him to realize his own. □

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THE INSIDER

(Continued from page 20)

tle the Warriors.

Today, their shield of invincibility has been ripped away. What happened? In today's chaotic world, one immediately thinks of drugs. Did the same thing that took the heat off Dwight Gooden's fastball and the arc off Micheal Ray Richardson's jumpshot erode the talents of Hawk and Animal?

The answer is a resounding "No!" Hawk wouldn't take aspirin for his broken leg; these two are as anti-drug as they come. What, then? How has the rest of the wrestling world surpassed the meanest tag team in wrestling history?

I spoke with Jim Cornette about this over the phone, and in between insults, he said some things that made sense to me:

"I hated them then, and I hate 'em now," Cornette squeaked, "but I must admit, The Road Warriors of 1983 were as good a tag team as you'll ever see. In every sense of the word they were indestructable. The problem is with that pencil-pushing Ellering. He had in his possession two of the greatest athletes in the world. And they like each other, they co-operate. No ego clashes, no petty inner feuds. With that combination, Hawk and Animal should never lose.

"But Ellering can't manage to find a zipper on his pants," Cornette continued. "He's useless to the Warriors. He imparted no game plan, no strategy. He let them into the ring and said, 'Okay, boys, rip heads!' Look, pro wrestlers are not rocket scientists, but if you're going to wrestle the same way time and again, sooner or later your opponents are going to catch on.

"And a brain like mine will take advantage of a favorable situation. The Warriors are lost. They'll never be the same. The new, re-

vamped Midnight Express is the greatest tag team in wrestling today. The Road Warriors are yesterday's headlines—good for wrapping fish."

Two months after I took a position at *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, I became embroiled in a matter from which escape was only possible by the transfer of a large sum of money from one source to another. Possessing neither the cash nor the resources to obtain it, I approached editor Peter King about a leave of absence, so that I might better concentrate my fundraising efforts (fleeing to Mexico was also under serious consideration). The next day, a check drawn from Peter's personal account in the amount I needed appeared on my desk. I was saved.

Such is the nature of the man I called boss for over two years. Patient and generous, trusting and moral—somewhat of an anomaly in the world of big-time publishing. That's all over now. Last week, Peter resigned. That he leaves an unfillable void in his wake is an understatement. You know Peter as a reserved, unflappable columnist. His simple insights are worth a dozen of my overdone columns. But Pete's real value is behind the scenes: negotiating an exclusive *Inside Wrestling* interview with a belligerent manager, coordinating photography sessions with various grapplers, mediating the half-dozen egos that circulate quite viciously sometimes at this magazine.

He was, as Stu Saks points out in this issue's "Editor's Notebook," the glue that holds our family of magazines together. Without him we will survive—perhaps even prosper—but we will be poorer for the effort, deprived of a respected leader. Good luck, Pete, in all your endeavors. □

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November 1985/Freebirds-Warriors, Mid-South, Haynes, Rhodes, Savage.
December 1985/Hogan, Zbyszko-Martel, Murdoch, Dillon, fiendish faces.
January 1986/Savage-Santana, Abdullah, Humongous, Von Raschke, Comiskey Park, Taylor.
February 1986/Junkyard Dog, Rude, Patrick, Garvin, Reed, Datebook.

March 1986/Starrcade '85, Ventura, Windham, Sunshine, Slaughter.
April 1986/Savage-Hogan, Martel-Hansen, 1985 in Pictures, Warriors, DiBiase.
May 1986/Sammartino, R&R Express, Sunshine-Hyatt, Slater, Devastating Holds, Hall & Hennig.
June 1986/Hogan-Muraco, Midnight Express, Freebirds, Battle of Belts II.
July 1986/Orndorff-Piper, Blanchard-T.A., Matches of '80s, Shepherders, Bockwinkel, Bulldogs.
August 1986/Crockett Cup Tourney, Jake Roberts, Midnight Rockers, Von Erichs, Wrestling II.
September 1986/Bulldogs, Blanchard-Gibson, Lugar, Dundee, UWF tourney.
October 1986/Orndorff, Rude-Brody, Bash, Bockwinkel, Gordy, Adams.
November 1986/Andersons-R&R Express, Machine, Gordy, Managers.
December 1986/Machines, Fantastics, Warriors, WWF Muchnick Tourney.
January 1987/Russians, Hyatt-Dark Journey, WWF Top 50, Fab Ones.
February 1987/Road Warriors, Savage, Windham & Lugar, 1987 Datebook.
March 1987/Kamala-Hogan, Starrcade 86, Atlas, Williams, Tatum.
April 1987/1986 in Pictures, Kevin Von Flair, Rich, Hennig-Bockwinkel.
May 1987/Nikita-Flair, Bulldogs, Albano's career, Snuka-DeBeers, Taylor.
June 1987/Hogan-Andre, Hall, Parsons, Garvin, WWF title history.
July 1987/Midnight Express, Savage-Steamboat, Adams, NWA in Boston.

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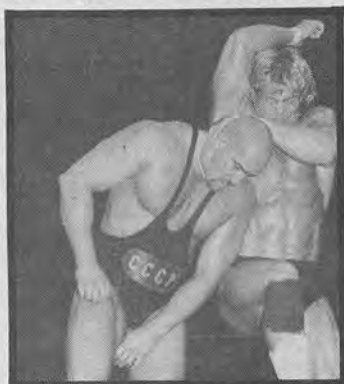
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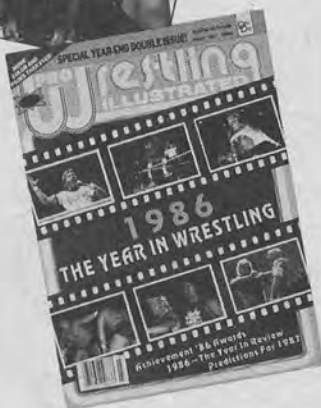
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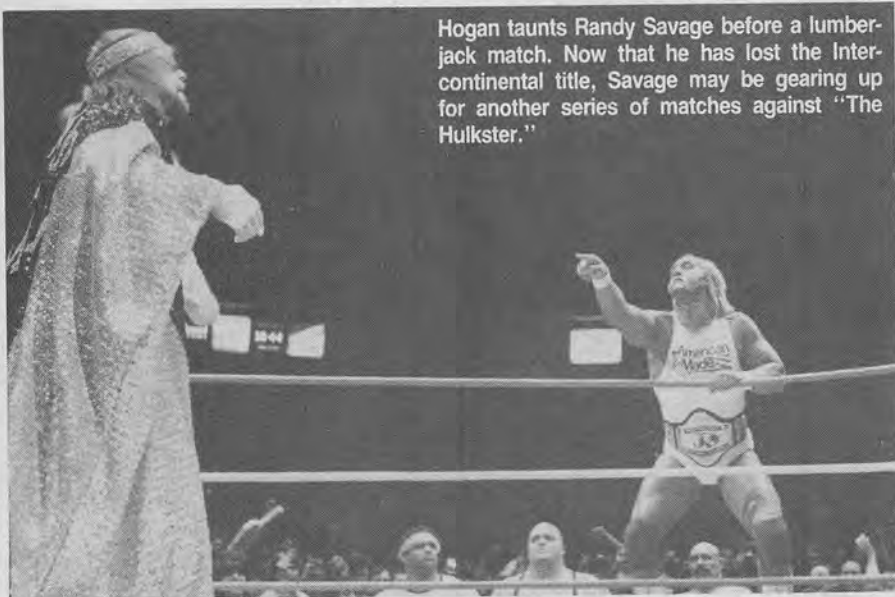
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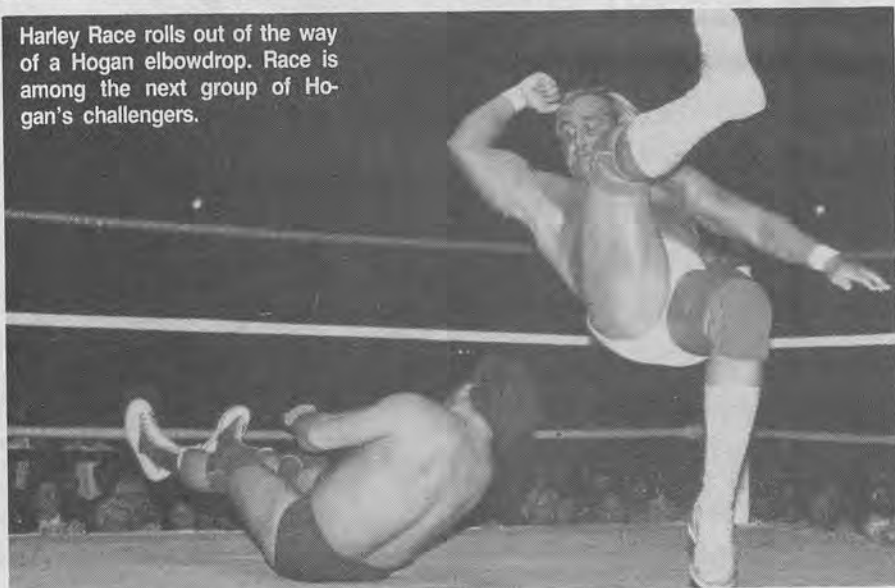
HULK HOGAN

(Continued from page 37)



Hogan taunts Randy Savage before a lumberjack match. Now that he has lost the Intercontinental title, Savage may be gearing up for another series of matches against "The Hulkster."

Harley Race rolls out of the way of a Hogan elbowdrop. Race is among the next group of Hogan's challengers.



zil, Thesz battled Sailor Art Thornas, and Gagne battled scientific standout Billy Robinson in several thrilling encounters. Hogan has yet to defend his title against a "clean" wrestler. By accepting the challenge of scientifically oriented wrestlers, Hogan would go a long way toward refuting his critics, who claim his title reign has been one-sided, and gaining the respect of the entire wrestling community.

Repertoire

Perhaps the strongest criticism leveled against Hulk Hogan is the fact that his style is extremely limited. Indeed, viewing any series of Hogan matches leads one to question The Hulkster's grasp of funda-

mental wrestling. His repertoire is familiar—an elbowsmash, a legdrop, and a pin is Hogan's usual game plan. By placing himself in intensive training regimen with a wrestling coach, increasing his catalogue of maneuvers, and applying that knowledge in the ring, the strongest criticism to his title reign will be nullified.

Longevity

Behind the legend of Hulk Hogan remains a champion whose title reign has lasted 3½ years—a blink of the eye compared to his predecessors. In the WWF alone, Hogan ranks a third behind Sammartino and Bob Backlund in the duration of championship reigns.

In two separate reigns, Bruno defended the belt for 11 years, wrestling three times as often as Hogan. Backlund's reign, also more prolific than The Hulkster's, spanned six years.

There's nothing Hogan can do but wait and successfully defend his title in order to correct the longevity problem. Even so, however, Hogan's crown has been marred by interruptions: six weeks here for a movie shoot, two there for a television show, a month's vacation—hardly the match-a-day work ethic of Thesz, Gagne, or Sammartino.

Those who defend Hogan claim he has run out of challengers. This is ridiculous. Because the New York Mets defeated the Philadelphia Phillies in a four-game series in April, should they no longer have to play them in September? Wrestlers improve; they change and modulate. The Randy Savage Hogan barely defeated last December will be different from the Savage who comes after him *this* December. The real test of a champion is how long the belt remains in his possession. Time is the final arbiter of greatness, and Hogan still has a way to go.

Despite thinking to the contrary, there remain many mountains for Hulk Hogan to conquer. New opponents—after easy money, big-city glory, and a shot at the title—flock into the WWF each day. Suppose Nikita Koloff or Lex Luger or Kevin Von Erich decide to test the Big Apple? There are hundreds of explosive matchups yet to occur. If his victory over Andre assured him of anything, it is a steady diet of hungry opponents. Of course, with his tremendous personal fortune, Hogan could retire tomorrow and never wrestle another day in his life. That is his decision to make.

But if his excuse is that there are no goals left for him to obtain, don't believe him. Hulk Hogan has barely begun. ☐

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MIKE VON ERICH (Continued from page 44)



died immediately.

Meanwhile, police and family were still unaware of Mike's whereabouts, although they had a good idea what had happened. "That Saturday night, we found a note in Mike's apartment," said Kevin. "It basically said, 'Please understand. I love you all, but I can't do anything right.' Right away, I knew what he did, but we were all hoping that we'd find him before he did anything."

An intensive search began, but the Denton County Sheriffs Department had no clues as to Mike's whereabouts until a citizen reported an abandoned car outside the park. "We knew what we had," said Capt. Alan Lewis of the Sheriffs office. "We found a note in the car which said, 'Mom and Dad. I am in a better place. I'll be watching,' and sent out helicopters, boats, people on foot, and police dogs."

On Thursday morning at 9:20 a.m., a police dog found Mike's body in a sleeping bag. Doris Von Erich, who was on the scene, identified her son's body, and Denton County Justice of the Peace Hubert Cunningham pronounced Von Erich dead. Toxicological reports released a week later by the Dallas County medical examiner's of-

Mike was always extremely popular with the fans. Being a Von Erich carried a great deal of responsibility.

fice affirmed acute Placidyl intoxication as the cause of death.

"I think he was in pain," said Cunningham, "and Placidyl has an effect that if you get real despondent, it will give you suicidal tendencies."

Over 500 friends, fans, and family members attended funeral services Saturday afternoon, April 18, at the First Baptist Church of Dallas. Mike was buried next to David at Grove Hill Cemetery. Kevin, who is currently the World Class heavyweight champion, cancelled all of his matches up to his May 2 title defense against Nord the Barbarian at Texas Stadium. "I just couldn't bring myself to wrestle," he said.

A statement released by the Von Erich family on April 16, two days before Easter Sunday, said: "Mike loved his fans, family, and above all, his Lord. He was in constant pain but wanted so much for everyone to be proud of him. Please let our tragic loss be a positive message to kids and families everywhere this Easter. Sunday, everyone join hands and be grateful that your family is together." □

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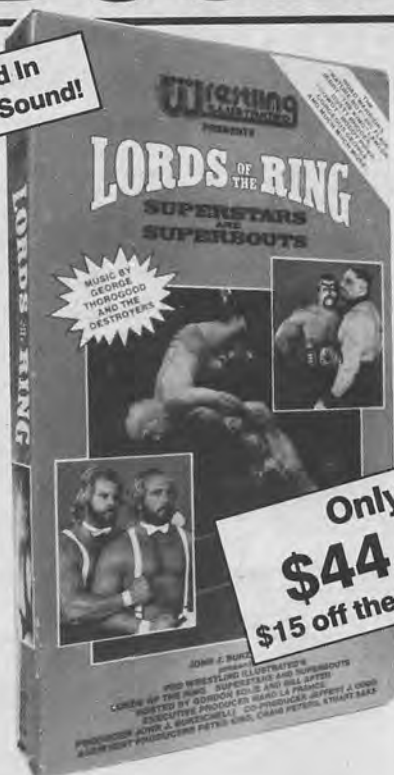
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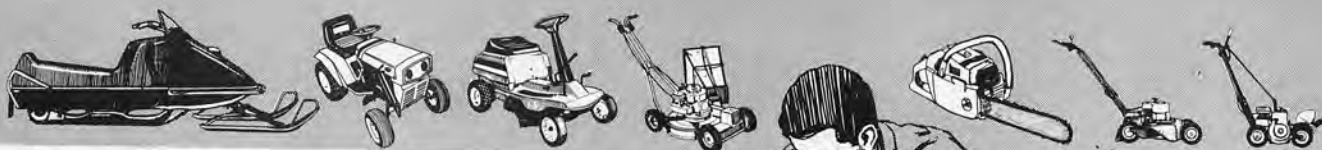
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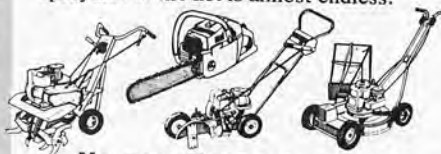
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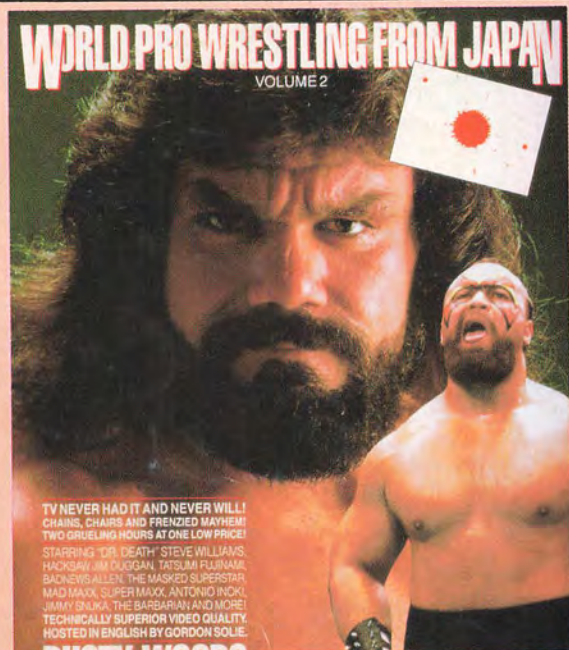


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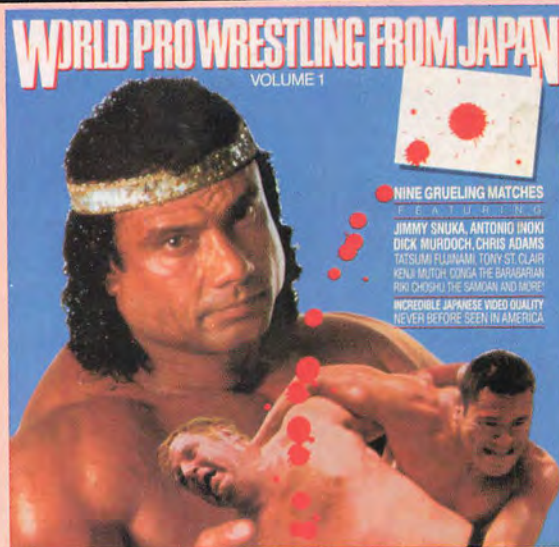
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